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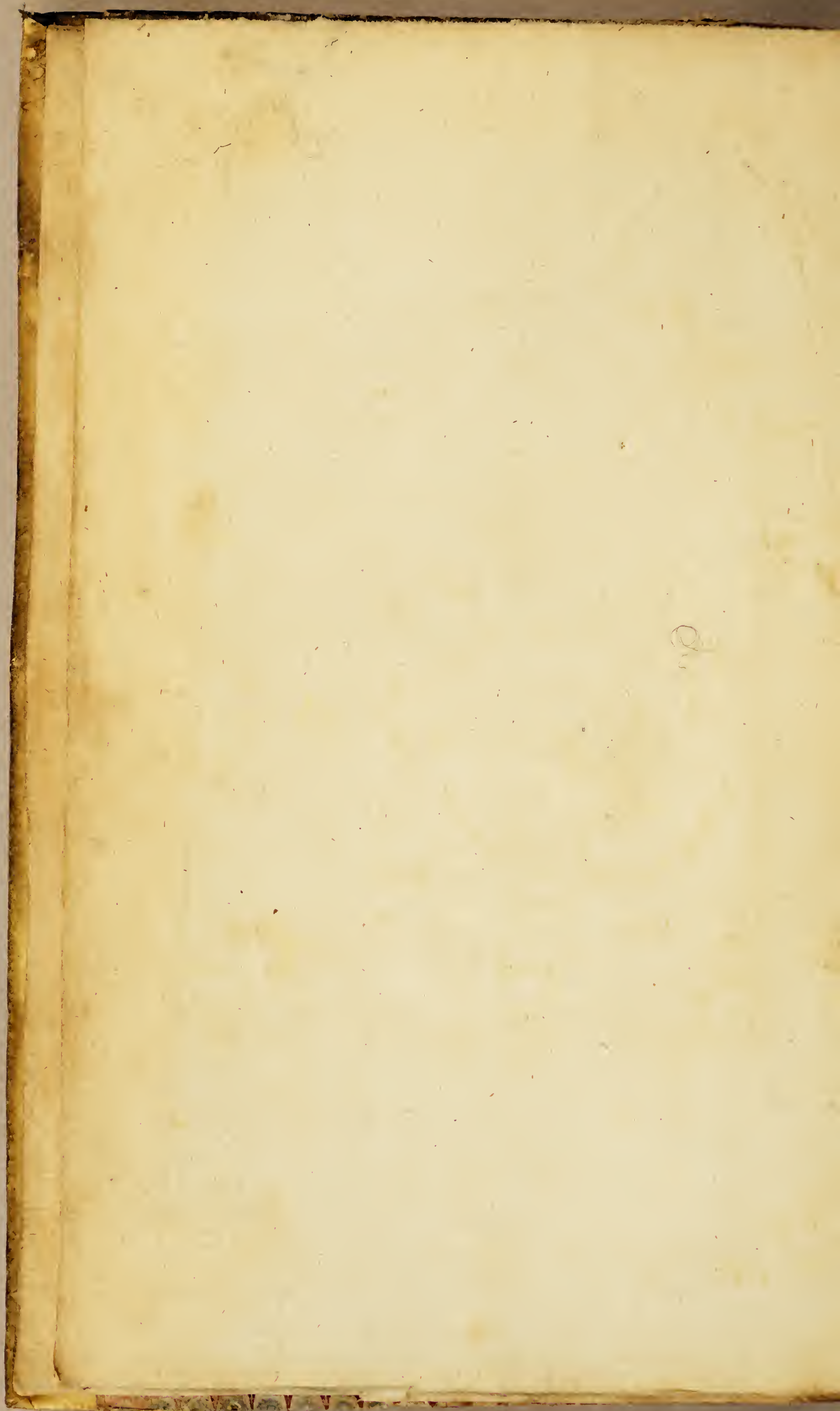
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T H E
HISTORY
 Of the PROPAGATION of
CHRISTIANITY,
 And the OVERTHROW of
PAGANISM.

W H E R E I N

The CHRISTIAN RELIGION is confirmed.

The Rise and Progress of HEATHENISH
 IDOLATRY is considered.

The Overthrow of PAGANISM, and the spreading
 of CHRISTIANITY in the several Ages of the
 Church is Explained.

The Present State of HEATHENS is inquired into; and
Methods for their Conversion proposed.

By *ROBERT MILLAR*, M. A.

In Two VOLUMES.

The Third Edition Corrected, with Additions.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N:

Printed for A. MILLAR, at *Buchanan's* Head against
St. Clement's Church in the *Strand*. M.DCC.XXXI.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

IT may be here expected that I should give some account of the *Design* I had in publishing this *Book*, and the *Method* I have made use of in writing it. My *Design* is to excite us to thankfulness to our gracious GOD, for being delivered from that miserable *Darkness* and *Idolatry*, under which we were sunk, before the *Light* of our *Holy Religion* shone among us; to set before us the wonderful Steps of *Divine Providence* in propagating CHRISTIANITY over the blinded World down to the present Time; to move our Bowels of Pity for that slavery and thralldom to which the *Heathens*, who make up so great a part of the world, are yet chained by the Enemy of Mankind; and to make *Christians* with fervour and zeal contribute their utmost endeavours, that the Salvation purchased by CHRIST may be known to the *Ends of the Earth*.

The *First Chapter*, on the *Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion*, was in my opinion necessary to this End. For if Men be not firmly persuaded of this point, 'tis impossible they can be truly thankful for the *Gospel of CHRIST*, or that they can be fervent and zealous for the *Propagation* of it throughout the World. *Atheists, Antiscripturists, Free-thinkers*, as commonly called, and *Deists*, will never be concerned to propagate the *Christian Religion* (which they themselves believe not) among *Heathens, Jews, or Mahometans*. Nay, they who

are carved out for this Work must believe, that *there is none other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved, but the Name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth*. I have therefore offered what appeared most proper and necessary to assert the *Truth* of both *Natural* and *Revealed Religion*, to remove the Props of *Infidelity*, and to settle the *Faith* of *Christians* upon the solid foundation of the *Scriptures* of the *Old* and *New Testament*. Indeed we have all the *Proof* of the *Truth* of our *Religion* that the nature of the thing will bear, or that is agreeable either to the *Wisdom* of *GOD* to give, or the *Reason* of *Men* to expect. I know there are many excellent books printed upon this *Subject*; but the matter is so important, that it deserves to be studied over and over again: and I presume this book may come into several hands who have seen few writers upon this *Subject*, and having read little about it, will be glad to find it treated here: and we ought to have a regard to those people, especially since *Atheism* and *Unbelief* are come to such a prodigious height, that *learned* and *unlearned*, *town* and *country* should be necessarily guarded against the *Infection*. And I hope that when any man of sense will be at pains to compare the writings of *BLOUNT*, *GILDON*, *TOLAND*, and other *Antiscripturists*, with what has been written by many excellent persons, and even with what I have offered in this *first Chapter*, he will easily discover the *weak Reasoning*, the *bad Philosophy*, and the *strong* and *unreasonable Prejudices* these adversaries are guilty of, and so will have the stronger and fuller *confirmation* of *Christianity*. *Divine Providence* wisely orders that what is designed to the prejudice of our *Religion*, does in the end turn to its advantage. As

The P R E F A C E.

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As to the *Historical Part* of the following *Book*, by which I mean the *Third, Fourth, Sixth* and *Eighth Chapters*, it may be observed, that the most part of *Ecclesiastical Historians* hitherto have mixed this affair of the *Propagation of Christianity* with so many other things, that 'tis either slighted or negligently handled by them; or the *Subject* is not easily observed by common *Readers*, who cannot have their minds fixed upon so many things at once. Beside, they never continue the matter to the *present time*, some ending it with the *Twelfth Century*, others with the *Thirteenth* or *Fifteenth*, and some are far from carrying it that length. The learned Dr. CAVE, to whom I own I have been very much obliged, in his *Introduction to the Lives of the Fathers*, has given us an excellent account of the *Overthrow of Paganism*: but he goes no further than to the end of the *Fourth Century*, and there leaves us. I therefore humbly conceived it would be proper to deduce this matter from the *first foundation* of the *Christian Church* to our time; that the *Reader* may at one view see the amazing conduct of *divine Providence* in all ages, in enlarging the *Kingdom of CHRIST*, and *giving him the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*. In the *Eighth Chapter* I have considered the endeavours of both *PAPISTS* and *PROTESTANTS*, so far as they have come to my knowledge, in the different parts of the world in the *two last Centuries*, and in that which is now running. The unwearied diligence of the *Church of ROME* may awaken us from our security, to a more serious concern about so important a work. Do they stop in bringing their *Profelytes* to a *formal superficial profession* of complying with some *religious Ceremonies*? *PROTESTANTS* should go farther,

and inspire their *Converts* with the *power* and *life* of *Religion*, with *love of the truth*, as it is in *JESUS*.

When I think upon the great extent and heap of things that are in *Ecclesiastical History*, I have often entertained this opinion, that the best method to manage them is by *parcels*. What I now undertake is but one corner of that great field: yet 'tis of great importance; for the *Propagation of Christianity* in all ages, by the efficacy of the *Gospel*, accompanied by the *SPIRIT of GOD*, demonstrates our Religion to be divine. So that even the *historical* part of this *essay*, from first to last, is an argument of the *truth of Christianity*. *Mahometism* was propagated by the dint of the sword; wherever the *Gospel* shines, *Pagan* darkness flies away like shadows before the sun: but the *Doctrine* revealed by the *SON of GOD*, and confirmed by his death and sufferings, does flourish and spread over all the world, in spite of all the allurements of *flesh and blood*, and all the powers of *hell and earth* combined against it; and the longer it shines, the more glorious will the beauty thereof appear.

'Tis true, the *corruptions* and *innovations* that have crept into the *Christian Church*, in *doctrine*, *worship*, *ceremonies*, *discipline* and *government*, with the opposition made to the same; the *contests* occasioned by *Heretics* and *Councils*, and by the *pride*, *precedencies* and *preferments* of *Popes*, *Patriarchs*, *Cardinals*, *Bishops*, and the rest of the *Hierarchy*, do now make up the far greater part of *Church History*. If men professing *Christianity*, especially *Church-men*, had walked more conformably to the *Holy Scriptures*, and particularly to the rules of the *Gospel* and the example of

CHRIST

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CHRIST our *Lord* and *Master*, or like the *Apostles* and *primitive Christians*; there had been little occasion for these things. But the *Propagation* of *Christianity* is a subject attended with peculiar beauties, which the *Church* ought always to have in view. Here we see the accomplishment of the *Predictions* and *Prophecies* in the *Old Testament*, concerning the *enlargement* of the *Gospel-Church*, and the *calling* of the *Gentiles* fulfilled in every age of the *New Testament*, and the mercy extended even to ourselves; so that *the uttermost parts of the earth* are given to our Redeemer for *his possession*, and *the isles wait for his law*. Here we see *Dagon* falling before the *Ark*; *ignorance*, *heathenish idolatry*, *cruelty*, and the *tyranny* of *Satan* chased away by the *power* of the *Gospel*. Here we observe the *Kingdom* of CHRIST, without force of arms, spread itself through the whole world in a short space of time, and that by the preaching of a few despised *persons*, several of them being unlearned *Fishermen*: here we find the *Word* of GOD triumphing over all the power and policy of *men* and *hell*, making its way, in opposition to the *wisdom* of *philosophers*, the *arts* of *magicians*, the *will* of *princes*, and all the *temptations* and *terrors* of the world. This demonstrates its *Original* to be divine, and its *Protector* Almighty. *Christians* in many parts of the world seem now to be awakened to a more than ordinary concern to have the salvation purchased by CHRIST known over the whole habitable earth; and I desire to join my hearty prayers, that *the earth may be full of the knowledge of the LORD*, as the *waters cover the sea*; that *all the kingdoms of the world may become the kingdoms of our LORD*
and

and of his CHRIST; that he may reign for ever and ever.

I have sometimes taken notice of the state of remote *Christian Churches*, surrounded by *Heathens* and *Enemies* to our *Holy Religion*. The serious consideration of their case may move us to adore the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of our *God*, in granting us the *Gospel Privileges* which we enjoy, that have been purchased by the death of our *Redeemer*, and transmitted to us by the wrestlings and sufferings, the blood and treasure of our noble *Ancestors*: And therefore we are called to a *Christian* improvement of so valuable mercies; especially when the barrenness of many places, that once enjoyed these favours, has brought them at this day under the feet of *Infidel Oppressors*.

I have also observed some good things in agitation in several parts of the world, for the *Advancement* of *Christianity*, which we have an account of by several *Books* and *Papers* which come not to every body's hand, who may have access to this performance; and therefore I hoped it might be useful to give some view of them, that every *Reader* may be awakened to a pious concern for the *Church* of *God* in the remote corners of the world; that they may wrestle for the same at the throne of grace, and may be excited to *Charity* and *Good Works*. One great use of *Ecclesiastical History* is to be subservient to *Divinity*, and in this view I have endeavoured to manage what I here undertake.

I know not but some *Readers* may be weary of the account given of the *Rise* and *Progress* of *Idolatry* among several nations, from the creation of the world to the birth of *Christ*, in *Chapter Second*;

Second; of the *Reasonings* against *Paganism*, in *Chapter Fifth*; and of the *present State* of *Heathens*, in *Chapter Seventh*. But I am humbly of opinion, that without these the work would be imperfect, these *Chapters* being necessary to my main design: for serious thoughts upon the *dis-mal State* of the world before the *Coming* of *Christ*, may make us more truly thankful for the *Redemption* he has purchased, and for the errand on which he came, *to destroy the Works of the Devil*, and *to bring Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*. Besides, the *Origin* and *Progress* of *Idolatry* may explain several *Texts* of *Holy Scriptures*, and clear up some *Ecclesiastical Antiquities*. In the *Fifth Chapter* I have not only discovered the *Vanity* and *Folly* of *Paganism*, but also given a taste of the state of the *Controversy* between the *Heathens* and *Christians* in the first ages of the *Church*, to enlighten the *History* of that time, and to make us value our delivery from *Pagan* darkness, and being brought to partake of the *Privileges* of the *Christian Church*. And this may also discover to *Youth* the *Vanity* of *Pagan Superstition*, when reading their *Classic Authors*, which are full of it. The *present State* of *Heathens*, in the *Seventh Chapter*, may not only open the face of affairs in these distant parts of the world, and lead us to understand what *Christians* have done to deliver these nations from *Pagan Idolatry* and *Satan's Tyranny*; but may quicken our *Sympathy*, and enliven our *Prayers* for those *who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*, in the *Habitations of Cruelty*, and inspire us with a pious concern for their being brought to the *Knowledge* of the *Truth*. I
have

have been also sometimes obliged to take some notice of the first discoveries made in *Europe*, of those remote Regions, of their *Geography*, *History*, *Trade*, *Customs*, &c. as well as of their *Heathenish Religion*; and the prospect I have given may help to direct men of judgment and zeal to contrive and employ proper means for their *Conversion*.

In the *Last Chapter* there are some farther *Means* proposed for the *Conversion* of the *Heathens*, with *Arguments* to promote the same. This is a work that my soul does earnestly wish for. If *Christians* would serve God in *Spirit* and *Truth* at home; if they would lay aside their *Divisions*, *Parties*, and unchristian *Humours*; if they would contribute generously, out of their worldly *Substance* that God has given them, for advancing his *Glory* in the world; if *Kings*, *Princes*, and *public Societies* would take the conduct of this work in their hands; if *Persons* of extensive Knowledge, bright *Love* and *Charity* to *perishing Souls*, and animated with *ardent Zeal* for the *Glory* of God, would offer themselves as *Missionaries*, and might be orderly sent into *Heathen* countries, especially where they can be encouraged and supported by *European Colonies*: If these things were done, what a glorious addition to the *Church* of Christ might we justly expect? And what *Christian* can refuse to give his helping hand to so good a work? Surely if he hath *Love* to our *Redeemer*, or real *Desire* to see the *Honour* of our God promoted, he cannot decline it. The time is coming, when the *Fulness of the Gentiles shall come*, and all *Israel shall be saved*. Let us do our duty, and we need not doubt but God will crown our endeavours with success. So

The P R E F A C E.

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So much for the *Subject* and *Design* of this *Book*. As to my *Method* in writing it, the design is large, *In magnis voluisse sat est*. I have had occasion to make use of several Authors in writing it, and no man can write with any accuracy of ancient *Ecclesiastical History* without them. I have endeavoured to do them justice, not only by giving their words in the *Body* of the *Book*, but also the place where they are to be found, at the *foot* of the *Page*. I did not think it necessary always to produce their words in the original *Greek* or *Latin*, except where there was an *Emphasis*. To have cited the whole *original* text of each Author, would have swelled the book and price beyond what I intended. However, so far as I could, I have endeavoured to be exact, and to see them with my own eyes. 'Tis true, sometimes my little *Library* would not furnish me with each of them, but I have been obliged oftner than once to *Friends* and good *Neighbours*, to whom I here render my thankful *Acknowledgments*. In the three last *Chapters* of this work I had few *Authors* who went before me; I did not meet with any who had reduced the several things that relate to my *Subject* into *Order*, and therefore I was obliged, from *Narratives* scattered in several *Authors*, to cut out my way the best I could, which may plead excuse for *Imperfections* or *Faults*, tho' as far as I could I endeavoured to guard agianst them.

After all, there are no doubt many *Defects* and *Inaccuracies* in the *Performance*. It was written by starts, amidst the hurry of a multiplicity of affairs that lie upon me in the *Pastoral Charge* of a *Great Congregation*, besides many other lesser

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avocations. It was not my main business, I rather looked on it as a *Relaxation*; I went to it and came from it as such. Nor do I pretend to that *Politeness of Stile* necessary for the refined taste of some delicate palates: but the *Design* is good: The time is coming, and I hope near at hand, when God will do great things for *Advancement* of our *Redeemer's Kingdom*. May a holy warmth, through the blessing of God, diffuse it self far and near, for the *Salvation* of perishing *Souls*, and may a great *Harvest* be reaped in every corner of the world. If any thing in this *Performance* makes us truly humble and thankful for our *Christian Privileges*; if it helps to cool uncharitable *Heats* among our selves; if it contributes to make us more ready to join heartily together in our *Prayers*, and to embrace every opportunity of promoting the *Glory* of God and the *Knowledge* of Christ, by supporting and propagating *Christianity*, and overthrowing *Paganism* in any part of the world; if it in any measure *enlightens* our Mind, *establisches* us in the *Faith*, and *enflames* our *Zeal* for doing good, may the only wise God have the *Glory*, to whom alone it is due.

PAISLEY, October 21st,

1723.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
Propagation of Christianity,
AND
Overthrow of Paganism.

CHAP. I.

*The Truth and Excellency of the Christian
Religion confirmed.*

THE glorious enlargement of the kingdom of our Redeemer over the world, the preservation of it for so many ages, the overthrow of heathenish idolatry, which had so deep rooting for some thousands of years, and yet was overturned, not by might nor by power, but by the rational methods of the Gospel, enlightning the minds of men, and persuading them to subject themselves to the laws of Christ, of which we have an account in the following history; are plain proofs, that the *Christian Religion* is of God, and is no human invention. Nevertheless I judge it proper, in the entry, to demonstrate the truth and excellency of our holy Religion, that we may be fully persuaded of the truths it reveals; that we may admire the providence of God in the propagation and preservation thereof, and

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may be inspired with a true zeal in promoting the same over the world.

The Being of God, of divine Providence, and the Immortality of the Soul, are fundamental truths in Religion, which we shall demonstrate in the first place, to raze the grounds of atheism, and to confirm our faith in these important articles.

The existence of God is a truth no less certain than that of our own, and it may be easily shown that 'tis a consequence of it: for as we have infallible evidence that we our selves are, so from hence we may be well assured that something has ever been. For supposing that there once was nothing, we may be as sure that neither we nor any other Being could have existed, as that nothing could not produce something, or that something could not produce it self. This therefore cannot be doubted that some Being or other eternally existed. The great question is, what manner of Being an eternal Being is? Now 'tis evident that an eternal Being was ever a necessary Being; the reason is, because it was without beginning: for 'tis as certain that a Being without a beginning necessarily was, as that there was never any possibility of its not having been. 'Tis also evident, that this original eternal Being was not only such as of absolute necessity ever was; but also such as of absolute necessity must ever continue to be. By an absolutely necessary Being, I understand not what exists without any reason of its existence, but such a Being as ever contained a necessary reason of its existence in its very nature, without the least dependence either on its own will or that of any other Being. That there could be no other Being on whose will and causality such an eternal Being depends, is self-evident; and that its own will, which, as is equally clear, could have no influence on its existence, or the continuation thereof, because not antecedent thereto, is equally manifest. Consequently the reason of his existence must be included in his very nature, without the least Dependence either on his own will, or that of any other Beings; and therefore strictly and absolutely necessary.

'Tis therefore evident, that there is an eternal independent Being, and that such an eternal Being cannot but be

be absolutely necessary. To gain a more particular knowledge of this Being, we shall make some search into the import, and consider the reason of necessary existence, which, 'tis observed, this Being includes and possesses. *First*, it appears to be fully demonstrable, that the reason of an absolute necessity of existence can be no less than a complication of all actual perfections, or that there is no kind nor degree of perfection which is not comprehended in the nature of such a necessary Being: for that the author of all Beings can himself want nothing of that perfection, which he has communicated to his Creatures, is undeniable.

We have already observed, that for a Being to exist with an absolute necessity, is to contain in it self a necessary reason of existence, without the least dependence, either on its own will, or that of any other Being; or, which in effect is the same, to be of such a nature as renders it an absolute contradiction, that it should either cease to be, or become other than what it is, by an essential mutation. To this we may now add, that if a Being in any respect is essentially imperfect, it can be no such absolute contradiction, that it should ever either cease to be, or become other than what it is, in any other respect. For there is no imperfection in any Being, but what implies a possibility of a greater and further imperfection, and consequently of the greatest of imperfections, *viz.* a ceasing to be. From which principles it evidently follows, that there is such a Being, whose nature excludes the very possibility of ceasing to be, and necessarily includes all possible perfections; and therefore we may with the greatest assurance affirm, that there is a God, that is, an eternal, absolutely necessary, and most perfect Being.

I know that there have been some, who have endeavoured to evade the force of these arguments, and all others, which have been well made use of to prove this fundamental article, by imputing the existence of us, and all things, to an infinite eternal succession of dependent changeable Beings. But such an infinite succession most

evidently implies an absurdity ; for it can have no cause from without of its existence, because all things which ever were in the universe are supposed to be contained in it. Neither can it have any reason within of its existence, because no one Being in this infinite succession, is supposed to be self-existent and necessary ; and where no one part is necessary, 'tis evident that the whole cannot be necessary. An infinite succession therefore of merely dependent Beings, without any original independent cause, is supposing somewhat to be caused, and yet that in whole absolutely caused by nothing ; which is manifestly absurd. And whether we suppose this existence from nothing, to commence this day, or from eternity, 'tis equally a contradiction ; and therefore the truth remains firm, and is further established, that there is an eternal, self-existent, independent Being.

The Being of a God may be also very well proved from the inconsistency and absurdity, to which all those may be easily reduced, who have endeavoured to account for the existence of the world, and all things therein by matter and motion : for it appears, from what has been said, that matter cannot be eternal ; for if it be eternal and uncaused, then it must also have been necessary and self-existing, and invested with all perfections ; so that it should have been absolutely impossible and contradictory to suppose it not to exist, or suffer any real change. But for any atheist to assert that it is so, would be the most absurd thing in the world : for is it not manifest that there is no contradiction in the nature of things, to suppose that the form of this world, the situation and disposition of its parts, the form of the matter of the whole, or any single portion, could be in any respect otherwise than what now they are ? Do not we see some change which happens in it every other day ? But we shall a little consider what some boasting atheists have said of motion and matter : They first affirm, that matter is eternal ; and next, that motion is an eternal essential property of it. The *first* of these is proved already to be false ; yet here let us suppose it true, and then see if the atheist can support his principles by the *second*. Now
if

Chap. I. *The Being of GOD.*

if motion was the eternal effect of matter, it must also have been necessary; and if it was necessary in the intire system of matter, it follows it was necessary to all its parts in the same degree: for all the parts of matter being, if equally eternal, equally necessary, 'tis unreasonable to imagine any one of their properties, which could not but exist with the very same necessity in all, to have been necessarily different in any. To imagine any portion or portions of matter should have eternally necessarily possessed any property, which another portion as eternally and necessarily wanted, would be in effect to make the necessity with which matter existed, to have been different, while we assert it to be the same. If motion therefore was necessary to every particle of matter in the same degree, 'tis evident every particle of it must have moved alike: both comparative rest and increase of swiftness must have been equally impossible, and a constant uniformity of motion must have discovered it self throughout universal nature. But this being evidently false, it follows undeniably, that motion was not the eternal effect or necessary property, either of all matter, or of any of its parts.

Spinoza, one of the most famous modern atheistical materialists, has affirmed, that there is only one numerical substance; that the material world and every part of it is the only necessary existing Being. *Hobbes* and he agree in bestowing intelligence on this material system of theirs. I need not stay to refute this: the principles already mentioned serve plainly to manifest its absurdity. Only I shall here remark, tho' they attributed intelligence to the system of matter, yet none ever asserted either the whole or any part of it to possess an essential liberty and freedom of action, without which 'tis plain there could be no beginning of motion. And indeed, as has been observed, had they been inclined to ascribe a freedom of action to any one part of matter, they would have been obliged to ascribe the same freedom to all; and if so, they could not have failed of a confutation from every man's experience. To refute *Spinoza's* opinion, let it also be considered, that eternity does not so much as enter into the idea of matter: if it be eternal, it must exist of it self, which is the most excellent of all

perfections, and does necessarily include all other; for if it exist of it self, it must be independent, almighty, eternal, unmoveable, and in a word, infinitely perfect. But 'tis unconceivable that matter, which is divisible, corruptible, unactive, and void of understanding, should be endued with the most noble of all properties, from which all others proceed. And as to one numerical substance, it does plainly appear, that the world is composed of innumerable substances really distinct from one another, and that the least atom can subsist, tho' other parts of matter were destroyed.

Epicurus, and since him, a great tribe of ancient and modern materialists, have endeavoured to subvert the Being of God, by another way of explaining the motion of matter. They have made motion an eternal effect of a supposed eternal invariable action of matter; or that every atom, or particle of matter, necessarily possesses a certain determinative gravity or weight, independent on any other Being, by virtue of which gravitation, the atoms combined into separate masses, moved still, till by their concurrence the world was formed as now it is. To refute this, we need only consider, that the gravitation of bodies is variable, according to the variety of situations; which plainly demonstrates that it does not proceed from any eternal independent principle, essentially or necessarily inherent in every atom or particle of matter (since such a principle could not be uniform and alike in all situations) but to be an effect depending upon something external. But if we should admit, that gravitation is such a necessary property of matter as the *Epicureans* would have it, yet 'tis impossible that it should have been the cause of that variety of motions which we experience in the world. For 'tis demonstrable, that the principle and laws of gravitation, since they must of necessity be allowed (if eternal) to be uniform and invariable, could never have been the necessary cause of various and contrary motions, such as may be observed in the present state of things: For instance, the projective motion of divers of the great bodies of the universe, tending to describe circles or ellipses, and the central motion of their several parts, tending always to strait Lines.

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If, after all, any atheist should be so absurd as to object, that perhaps motion was neither absolutely without a cause; nor yet the effect of any universal internal principle essential to matter, but a mere passion, communicated from one part to another, in an eternal circulation, as *Hobbes* and *Spinoza* imagined; this is the most unaccountable supposition of any: for in the case of such an eternal circulation, there's neither any external agent supposed, which might be the proper cause of the motion, nor any intrinsic reason in the bodies moved; but the bodies are conceived, in a manner purely passive, to transfer that motion to each other, which none of them in particular possess'd with an absolute necessity in its own nature, nor derived from the power of any proper agent whatsoever. Now this is to suppose motion to exist without either a proper cause, or so much as a reason of its existence; which is absurd.

We have now considered at some length the several ways by which the enemies of Religion have pretended to account for the motion of matter: and when all has been seriously weighed, it will appear manifest, that matter is no eternal self-active Being; that its motion must have been begun; that the cause of its motion must be some principle essentially distinct; and that this principle must be an immaterial agent, eternal, necessarily existent, and perfectly self-active, which is God.

Tho' these arguments which I have already made use of to prove this necessary truth, are in themselves most convincing; yet because a great many persons, who may read them, are not accustomed to an abstract way of reasoning, I shall therefore now propose some moral or physical arguments, to prove the same truth of the divine existence, which I hope will be more obvious to every common capacity: as these following.

If the world be not eternal, then there must certainly be a God who made it. To ascribe the formation of the world to an accidental unmanaged meeting of material atoms, is ridiculous, and is already disproved. That it could not be from eternity, the hills and vallèys do plainly demonstrate. The rains that fall on the earth, the ri-

vers which run into the sea, continually carry away some of the height into the Bottoms. Be the quantity then ever so small, 'tis certain the mountains would be levelled, and the valleys filled up in an infinite space of time. Were the earth from all eternity, there would be no mountains, no valleys; it would be all covered with water. Besides this physical proof, there are others which are very convincing; the remotest histories do not look back above five or six thousand years; the inventions of arts and sciences, and the erection of states, is but of yesterday in regard of eternity, as was long ago observed by the heathen poet *Lucretius* *. The ancientest monuments we have are very modern, being compared with infinite time. 'Tis impossible, if the world had been eternal, but the memory of some more ancient history than any we have must have been preserved. It cannot be conceived that men should be an infinite length of time without inventing things necessary for life; that they should have lived like savages, without any certain places of abode, without towns, without society; and that there should not have remained some monuments of great antiquity. All this persuades us that the world is not from eternity, but was created in time, according to scripture account, by God.

In the *next* place, the existence of God has been believed in all ages, and in all countries of the world, by *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, learned and unlearned. For proof of this we may find both in sacred and profane authors, that all people have acknowledged some deity or other, whom they honoured with worship. *There is no nation so wild, says Cicero †, none so gross, but is persuaded of the existence of the Gods: Many indeed have wrong notions of them, which proceeds from the vitious habit of the mind, but all men do conceive there is a divine power*
and

* *Lucretius* Lib. 5. vers. 325. & seqq.

Præterea si nulla fuit genitalis origo	But grant the world eternal, grant it knew No Infancy, and grant it never new; Why then no Wars our Poets Songs employ, Beyond the Siege of Thebes, and that of Troy.
Terrarum & cœli, semperq; æterna fuere;	
Cur supra bellum Thebanum & funera Trojæ,	
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere poetæ?	

† *Tuscul. quæst. lib. 1. operum pag. m. 1145. edit. Gronovii 1692.*

Chap. I. *The Being of GOD.*

9

and nature. And he makes *Velleius* the *Epicurean* say*,
That all the world is firmly persuaded of this truth; that
there are neither philosophers, nor ignorant people, but are
convinced of it. There is no person, says Ælian†, neither
Indian, Gaul, nor Egyptian, nor any Barbarian, who
makes any doubt but there are Gods, and that they take
care of our affairs. The second and seventh chapters of
 this essay will further prove this point. Indeed we might
 cite many testimonies of ancient writers ‡, and a great
 number of moderns, who have published relations of
 their voyages to confirm it. The absurd opinions of
 heathen philosophers or others, concerning the nature of
 the deity, does not weaken this truth. Many, even
 learned Men, do neither reason nor act consequentially;
 we ought not then ascribe to any man the consequence
 which may be deduced from his Opinion, when he himself
 rejects the same. 'Tis unjust to accuse the philosophers
 of bare-faced Atheism, since in spite of their impious
 principles, they professed to believe the existence of a
 God. Even *Epicurus* himself, according to *Cicero*, be-
 lieved it: *What nation, or what kind of man is there,*
(says he) who, without being taught, have not some idea of
the Gods by way of anticipation; and since this opinion is
neither established by precepts, nor by custom, nor by laws,
but every man has some innate knowledge of it, the same must
necessarily be true||. And the same orator in another place
 says, 'Tis so evident that the Gods are, that the man who
 denies it, I'll look upon him as a mad man**.

Tho' it be alledged, some whole nations do not dis-
 cover any knowledge of a deity, nor any sense of reli-
 gion; yet travellers, who have accused such of atheism,
 have been contradicted by others, who have enquired bet-
 ter into that affair. Some assert the *Cassrees* in *Africa*
 have no religion; but this is denied by *Dapper*, an ac-
 curate author worthy of credit. He maintains these

3

Bar-

* De nat. Deorum, lib. 1. operum pag. m. 1209.

† Variæ historiæ Lib. 11. Cap. 3.

‡ Seneca epist. 117.

|| De natura Deorum. Lib. 1. ubi supra.

** De nat. Deorum, Lib. 2. § 45. *Esse igitur Deos ita perspicuum est,*
ut id qui neget vix eum sana mentis existimem.

Barbarians do acknowledge a supreme Being, whom they call *Humma*, to whom they pay little or no worship, but when he sends them a good season, or when they complain of a bad one. But tho' there should be such miserable savages, who have little humane but their shape, this is no great honour to the atheists. A small number of monsters makes no exception to the general laws of nature; and the extravagance of some fools ought not in reason to hinder the belief of a deity from passing for universal.

This universal belief does not proceed from timorousness, as the poet insinuates*: faint-hearted fear does rather incline men to *Atheism*. I may appeal to the Consciences of atheists; let them tell us sincerely, if it be not the dread of divine judgments that makes them reason against the divine Being, that they may without remorse indulge their beloved lusts. Neither is ignorance of the causes of events in the world the occasion of this belief. The atheists themselves can never give any tolerable account of things by the laws of matter and motion, as is already demonstrated; there must be a recourse to a spiritual, intelligent and infinite Being. Nor is it to be ascribed to the policy of princes, who invented this invisible Being, the better to retain people within bounds; for the world was persuaded of the existence of God, before the foundation of empires, and the establishment of human laws. Princes could not pretend to establish this firmly by their own authority; nor could it obtain universally over the minds of all men, by their contrivance. Now, since 'tis undeniable all people have acknowledged a God; and no less certain, that this belief cannot proceed from the invention of men, we must necessarily conclude, the only cause is the full and clear evidence of the thing itself. What else could persuade all men, learned and unlearned, of this truth? Even *Sadducees*, who did not believe a judgment to come, who were not prepossessed with fear; *Stoicks*, who had the insolence to prefer themselves to God, and applaud their own wisdom; *Epicureans*, who alledged God did not concern

* *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor.*

concern himself in human affairs ; heathens who represented their Gods as most vicious and disorderly ; and the modern *Deists* who reject reveal'd religion ; do yet all maintain and own this fundamental truth of the existence of God.

To this we shall add, that the Being of God appears also from conscience : the very Heathens have a conscience within, which does sometimes accuse and excuse them, checks and chides them for sin ; yea, for secret sins that are beyond the cognisance of the world. *Juvenal*, a heathen poet, owns this*. Fears and terrors of conscience in sinners have sometimes arrived at that height, that they would have reckoned it a favour to be out of the world, that they might be free of them. Such terrors are to be found even with the stoutest sinners, and in men of highest place and power on the earth. The emperor *Caligula*, when it thundred, sneaked under a bed†. Some do what they can to smother these fears, while they wallow in sin, and spend their days in carnal jollity ; yet there come sudden terrors, which they cannot altogether extinguish : and these are revived, whether they will or not, when the Hand of God is upon them, when alone, or upon the confines of eternity. These things do arise from the secret sense of the supreme Being ; who knows, observes, and will call sinners to an account. Every man's conscience is as a thousand Witnesses to demonstrate to him the Being of a God.

This fundamental truth may be also confirmed from the nature of the human soul. How vast is its capacity, suited to all objects, as the eye is to all colours?

How

* Satyr. 13. ver. 2. & seqq.

——— *Prima est hac ultio, quod se
Judice, nemo nocens absolvitur*———

Ibid. ver. 192.

——— *Cur tamen hostu
Evasisse putes, quos diri conscia facti
Mens habet attonitos, & surdo verberare cedit,
Occultum quatiente animo tortore flagellum ?
Poena autem vehemens, ac multo seavior illis,
Quos & Caditius gravis invenit aut Rhadamanthus,
Nocte dieque suum gestare in pectore testem.*

† Sueton. in *Caligula*, Cap. 51.

How swift is its motion? The sun surrounds the world in a day, but the mind can run through the world in a moment, and on a sudden think upon things at a thousand miles distance. Such a spirit must proceed from a spirit higher than itself. How wonderful is the union of the soul and the body? That so noble a Being should inhabit a tabernacle of clay, and be linked to it by such a strait union: This must be the effect of infinite power. Who but the almighty infinitely wise God, could unite such different substances? More particularly, there are in the soul of man insatiable desires after happiness, contentment and satisfaction, which it cannot find in worldly things, and therefore still pursues after some higher happiness, to content and satisfy it for ever. These desires prove there is in the soul some notion of a perfect Being, proper to make us happy; and indeed if there were no such Being, the noblest creature in the world would be the most miserable. Other creatures obtain their ultimate desires, they are filled with good. If there were nothing to satisfy the vast desires of the soul of man, he would be in a worse condition than any creature whatsoever.

I might also confirm this truth, from the disposition and preservation of the world, into that beauty and harmony which is so wonderful in it; and the regular exact government of all creatures therein: but I shall soon have occasion to consider this, when discoursing of the providence of God, which will further demonstrate the truth of his existence.

To conclude, God's existence being so certain, it appears plainly, that atheism is the greatest evil and folly imaginable. 'Tis most irrational, contrary to the stream of universal reason, to the rational dictates of the souls of atheists themselves, and to the testimony of every creature; 'tis most impious. What monstrous impiety is it for wretched men to envy their Creator a Being, without whose goodness they could have had none themselves? 'Tis a thrust at his destruction, saying upon the matter, God is unworthy of a Being. Atheists are worse than heathens; they worshipped many Gods, but these,

these, none ; they preserved some notion of God in the world, these essay to raze it out. Atheists are someway worse than devils ; the demons are under the dread of the eternal *Jehovah* ; they cannot be atheists in opinion, for they feel the wrath of God tormenting them. Atheism has no footing in hell : 'tis destructive to human society, and to all probity and virtue. According to the opinion of these infidels, virtue is but a *Chimæra*, piety but a vain dream, uprightness no better than hypocrisy ; a friend may betray another, a citizen ruin his country, a son assassinate his father, that he may inherit his estate : if he escape the punishment of a civil judge, there is no other thing to be feared. *Cicero*, that great orator and philosopher, by the light of nature was persuaded of this of old, (his words are at the foot of the page* :) much more may we be certain of it in our days. To sum up all, atheism is the most dangerous evil ; he who denies the Being of God, and seeks to raze all notions of a deity out of his mind, what can he gain by this, but sordid pleasure, unworthy of human nature ? And supposing there were no God, which is impossible, what can he lose, but his fleshly lusts, by firmly believing there is one ? There may be a God for aught the Atheist knows, he can never demonstrate the contrary ; and if there be, as certainly there is, what a hot receptacle in hell must be reserved for these his enemies, who strike at his very Being ? Beside, 'tis remarkable that almost no atheist can be named in history, who came not to some fearful and untimely end.

We have now undeniably proved that God is, that he is the only eternal Being, that his existence is necessary, and that he is infinitely perfect ; all which attributes are most closely and most inseparably connected together.

And now we shall proceed to prove, and a little to consider some other of the divine perfections : for tho'
the

* *De natura Deorum, lib. 1. § 3, 4. Sunt enim Philosophi, & fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent humanarum rerum procuracionem deos. Quorum si vera sententia est, quæ potest esse pietas ? quæ sanctitas ? quæ religio ? — Atque hæc scio, an pietate adversus deos sublata, fides etiam, & societas humani generis, & una excellentissima virtus, justitia tollatur.*

the most glorious and supreme Being, be the most simple and free from any thing like composition, yet by reason of the weakness and insufficiency of our minds, we poor finite creatures, when we attempt to form a suitable conception of his infinitely perfect nature, are obliged to consider those particular ideas, one after another, which make up our general idea of his perfections.

This supreme Being must therefore be infinite, and omnipresent, because he is necessary and self-existent; for an absolute necessity has no relation to time or place: whatever therefore exists necessarily, must needs be infinite as well as eternal. A finite Being cannot be self-existent, for to suppose that, is absurd; for if a Being can, without a contradiction, be absent from one place, it may, without a contradiction, be absent also from another place, and from all places, and so could not be self-existent: but God's self-existence is already proved, therefore he is infinite and omnipresent. And from hence it follows, that this self-existent Being must be incorruptible, unchangeable, most simple and free from all affections of matter: for all these things are directly contrary to infinite perfection, and evidently imply, in their notion, a limited finiteness.

Since God exists of himself, hence it appears he is independent; for if all the power, glory, and perfection God possesses, flow alone from himself, as we must own, when we acknowledge his self-existence, it follows, that his wisdom, power and goodness depend upon none but himself. Hence since God has received nothing, nor borrowed from any, but hath all in and of himself, it follows, that nothing from without can change any thing in his essence or purposes; and since he exists of himself, nothing can limit his perfections, they are infinite. He who has received nothing from any, can lose nothing by any extent of time, or changes in it: He is eternal and unchangeable.

Next we observe, that this self-existent infinite Being must be necessarily but one; for to suppose two or more different natures self-existing, necessary and independent, is the same thing in consequence, as saying two absolute infinities; and if we say two, we may say as many as we please:

please: that is to say, none of them would be really infinite, for infinity is absolute and only. If we suppose two self-existent independent Beings, either of them may be conceived to exist alone, and so it will be no contradiction to imagine the other not to exist, and consequently neither of them will be necessarily self-existing. Since infinity excludes all limits, we are sure that God is one only, and no more; for two or more infinities involve the greatest contradiction, seeing to suppose two are infinite, is to suppose neither of them are so; for that were all one as to say, there were two alls, each of which were all: so that God, essentially considered, is one only. *Plato, Socrates*, and some other antient philosophers, in spite of all the prejudices of their education, acknowledged this truth. The multitude of false deities, adored by the heathens, flowed from different causes; they imagined it difficult to ascribe all the virtues in nature to one subject, and therefore attributed every one of them to a particular deity. The intolerable pride of vain men, made them desire to be counted Gods after their death; hence *Apotheoses* were multiplied; every city, each kingdom and profession must have their own protectors: Ignorant carnal men conceived of God as themselves, to be of different sexes and stations. When nations were at war with one another, they must have different deities for their protectors. The heathens, wanting divine revelation, became thus vain in their imagination; and through a foolish desire to have the object of their adoration before their eyes, they multiplied images, and by degrees conceived the original was also multiplied; and their poets deified all, to please those whose favour they courted, talking of as many gods, as men have inordinate affections. But we know, that since God necessarily exists of himself, nothing can be wanting in him; and if nothing be wanting, yea infinitely perfect, he can have no equal nor assistant: he is therefore the one independent self-existing Being.

Next we observe, that this supreme self-existing Being must be intelligent; for, as has been already proved, motion was not eternal, nor caused by matter, but by some

some eternal, immaterial, self-existent and self-active agent; but 'tis impossible for us to have any other Idea of this self-active agent, but as a thinking Being; and Thought is inseparable from Intelligence.

This eternal origin of motion is a necessary Being, as is already proved, and therefore he could never have begun motion without a necessary principle of self-determination; for if he had wanted this active principle, he would necessarily ever have remained so. But this self-determining principle implies plainly, that he eternally perceived the power of acting, and the difference of acts; and this perceiving carries necessarily along with it, and directly implies self-consciousness and intelligence.

This truth too might have been demonstrated from the works to be seen in the world, and particularly in man, who is endued with self-consciousness, thought and intelligence, communicated by his Creator. Now, if this self-existent Being were not intelligent, then this perfection in man would be caused by nothing, which is absurd; for no perfection can be in the effect, which is not in the cause; and 'tis plain, and shall be soon proved, that thought and intelligence cannot be produced by any thing in matter: This self-existent God, who is the author thereof, is then infinitely intelligent.

We come next to observe, that this self-existent Being is endued with a perfect liberty, choice and freedom of action. This is a necessary consequence of his knowledge; for what is intelligence without liberty? 'Tis no perfection at all. Without liberty nothing can be properly said to be an agent or cause of any thing; for to act necessarily, is really not to act, but only to be acted upon. If the supreme cause want this freedom, then all things in this world are absolutely necessary in their number, figure, motion, &c. Nothing which is, could possibly have not been; and nothing which is not, could possibly have been. But all this is so absurd, so false, so contrary to the nature of things, and common sense, that it plainly tells us, that God, the cause of all things, is endued with liberty, choice and freedom. The excellent books writ by *Galen, de usu partium*; Mr. Boyle, of *final causes*; Ray, *Derham*, &c. and

and, the discoveries made of late in natural philosophy, may convince any man fully, how every thing in nature exactly suits the end, and is most admirably made for it. But if God were not a free, but a necessary agent, then there could be no such thing as any final cause in the universe; to assert which, is against all sense and reason. I have insisted the longer in proving that these two properties, of intelligence and liberty, belong to the supreme Being, because that there lies the main question between us and the atheists, and particularly with *Spinoza* and his followers, who build all their strange doctrine of the nature of God, upon the denying of these.

Another attribute of this supreme self-existing Being, is omnipotence, a power to do every thing which is not contradictory in itself, or disagreeable to the divine nature. That the supreme Being is endued with this perfection, is undeniable; for, as has been proved, he is the only self-existing Being. All things in the universe are produced by him; they must all depend on him; whatever powers they have must be subjected to him. Nothing therefore can resist his will; he must without hindrance (of necessity) execute it with absolute power where he pleases. *Creation* and *Sustentation* may be justly called proper acts of omnipotence: a power which can perform these, may be equally capable to perform any thing else which is not a contradiction.

The next attribute we observe to belong to God, is wisdom; that is, an ability to know the fittest and best method of disposing things in all possible cases, and what are the most proper means to bring about what he thus knows to be meet and fit in the end. The Idea of creation implies wisdom; for omnipotence in a Creator could only produce of itself materials, disorderly rubbish and confused motion. If he had not contrivance and design, he would be below the meanest artificer; but design joined with omnipotence could not be sufficient for the Creator of the universe: for if he were not able to propose the best means for promoting the best ends, (that is wisdom) his designs and contrivances would be liable to the hazard of some defeat. But the other attributes, we have already

ready demonstrated, do sufficiently prove, that the Deity possesseth wisdom : for he is infinite, and every where present ; he is intelligent, and therefore being with, and penetrating all things, he must know all things, even the most hidden imaginations of our souls. And as all things are his dependent creatures made by him, and owing their powers and faculties every moment to him, so he must know what at present is done perfectly, and what will ever be done by these his depending creatures. As he must at one view see all the changes and circumstances of things, all their relations one to another, and their fitness to certain ends ; so 'tis impossible but he must exactly know what are the best means to promote the best ends. And as he can be hindred by no error or mistake, so having almighty power, he can be kept back by no opposition, from effectuating what is most proper in infinite wisdom to be done. It follows then, that God is infinitely wise, and all things are done by him, throughout the universe, in infinite wisdom. This truth too might have been confirmed by a large view and consideration of the works of creation, were this a proper occasion for it. The longer the world continues, and the greater the discoveries are, which are made in the works of nature, this argument grows the stronger. The heavens, the earth, the seas, the body of man, and every thing around us, do particularly discover the consummate perfection, and admirable excellency of their frame, and proclaim aloud the infinite wisdom of their creator.

Lastly, I observe of the supreme Being, that he must necessarily be of infinite justice, truth and goodness, and must be endued with all other moral perfections. This is evident, if we consider, 1st, That as there are different things in the world, so they are placed in different relations and circumstances: there are some things in their own nature fuitable and fit to be done, and other things again unfuitable and unfit to be done ; and 'tis self-evident, that a guilty criminal and an innocent person should not be treated after the same manner. This suitability seems to be before all positive appointment,
and

and to have a necessary foundation in the nature of things. *2dly*, Consider that these necessary relations of things appear what they really are to all intelligent Beings, except such as understand things to be what they are not. *3dly*, By this knowledge of the natural relations of things, the actions of all intelligent Beings are always directed, except their will be corrupted and swayed by some unreasonable lust. Therefore, *4thly*, The supreme Being, since he possesseth infinite knowledge, and knows things always as they exactly are in themselves; since he, being infinitely perfect, can want nothing, and cannot have his will swayed unreasonably; since being all-powerful, he must do what he pleaseth, and is limited by none; therefore 'tis evident he must necessarily do what is most fit and suitable to be done, that is, he must always do according to the exact laws of justice, truth, goodness, and all other moral perfections.

Now I go to consider the doctrine of Providence; and because 'tis in a special manner a necessary foundation for all religion, and denied by many modern deists, and some ancient philosophers, I shall therefore more particularly prove and explain it.

By the Providence of God, I understand his immediate providing for the preservation and subsistence of his creatures, and also his disposing and governing of them agreeably to their natures, for the most effectual attaining of his own ends.

That there is such a Providence, may be well deduced from what has been already demonstrated: for as to the preservation of creatures, 'tis evident that because they were created, they cannot be of themselves one moment independent. Upon whom therefore must they depend for their preservation? He must certainly be their creator, who is the only independent Being: he must be a Being who is omnipresent with all creatures in the universe: he must be infinitely wise, to know exactly the state and condition of all creatures: he must be perfectly good and benevolent, else he could not preserve all creatures; and he must be all-powerful, else he could not be able for this

work. But these attributes belong only to God, the most perfect Being: And on the other side, if he really has such attributes, he cannot but exert his Providence in the subsistence and preservation of those creatures which he has made.

Epicurus and his followers represent God as regardless of mankind; yea, some have asserted, that 'tis below the Divine Majesty any way to concern himself with any of the creatures whatsoever. But the absolutely perfect God is endued with infinite wisdom, and such an almighty power, as can admit of no fainting nor weariness; consequently he must, by his perfect wisdom, equally know, and, by his perfect power, equally be able to preserve and govern all things with equal care as any, and the least as well as the greatest: so that if he do not mind these things, he must be limited and contracted, which is contrary to his infinite nature; his perfections must be denied, and consequently his Being. Besides, what reason have we to judge any thing unworthy of his care, which he himself thought worthy of his creation?

But now we shall proceed in this subject, and make it evident, that as our arguments from reason convince us of such an universal Providence, so experience and observation sufficiently confirm it.

Gravity, as was formerly proved *, is no necessary property of matter; indeed 'tis to the preserving Providence of God alone that we must owe this wonderful effect. Gravity, by which the parts of greater bodies still tend to their respective centers, and the bodies themselves to one another, is the only cement which holds the world together. The motion of many of the great bodies of the heavens, is altogether necessary for the subsistence of animals and vegetables; but without gravity, that motion would soon reduce these glorious bodies to an irregular heap of confusion.

It is also to this preserving Providence that we owe the excellent regulation the winds are under. Did not God excite and regulate their motions; did chance only produce them, and put an end to them, the creation would

* See Pag. 7. and 8.

would always be in danger of ruin, the earth would soon come to be a hideous heap or frightful desert, the air would contain nothing but blasting and infection, the sea would be nothing else than a sink of poison and noisomeness. Whereas, on the contrary, by the care of Providence, the pestilential steams are dissipated; the seas are preserved wholesome by storms and tempests, and the air is made pleasant and refreshing by seasonable breezes.

It is also to this preserving Providence that we must owe the due proportion between the number of the different sexes and animals. This was necessary in man, and indeed in this case 'tis most remarkable. The proportion is observed to be commonly 14 males to 13 females, or thereabouts; by which overplus in the males, provision is made against the accidents to which that sex is chiefly exposed, as wars, navigations, &c. But without the supposition of a Providence, this admirable equality would have been absolutely unaccountable. If this were not so provided, the disproportion between the males and females might at some time or other have been so great, as very much to diminish, if not intirely to extinguish the whole species.

And further, that there is such a Providence, will appear, if we consider the due proportion of the numbers of animals and vegetables, by the equal prevention of their too great increase on the one hand, and destruction on the other. Thus, notwithstanding the great consumption of mankind, by wars, plagues and other accidents, we have good reason to assert, that the number of mankind in every age exceeds that of the former; and which is most remarkable, the increase is in such a gradation, as bears a proportion to the gradual invention of arts, and improvement of the methods of living, as they are discovered. And as to other animals, their propagation is ever proportionable, both to the length of their lives, and the accidents to which they are subject. Thus a doe, which lives long, breeds, after eight months pregnancy, but one, or at most, perhaps two; whereas the fox, which lives much shorter, breeds four in a lesser

time. The like is true of vegetables; by which wonderful uniform course of preserving Providence, the species are preserved, and yet the world not overstocked with inhabitants.

What has been said regards mostly the Providence of God, as it regards the preservation and subsistence of his creatures: We shall now consider his disposing and governing them.

'Tis in itself most plain, that the supreme perfect God never was indigent of any thing, nor ever could receive the least accession of happiness; consequently the end he proposed in the creating of the world, could not be simply his own good, but also that of his creatures. To obtain this end, his Providence hath wisely appointed these means: *1st*, That most exactly regular fabrick of the world: And *2dly*, That admirable government of such parts as are furnished with life and action. For I am not now upon the means of restoring fallen man, but upon the works of God, as they may be known by us from the light of nature.

For the *first*, It is not my design, neither is it proper here, to enlarge upon this subject, which is indeed very agreeable and delightful, and is excellently handled by others. However, I cannot but remark, that 'tis impossible for any *Epicurean*, or any enemy to Providence, to account for the present constitution of the world: for tho' it be supposed, that after innumerable ages the matter of the universe, by an internal principle of motion, might have combined into a world, without any fundamental or destructive error in its frame, yet none can imagine but that there would have been many deformities and irregularities; but let any attempt to name one such instance, they cannot find it. On the contrary, those things which at first view seem most exceptionable, as rocks, mountains, &c. appear to a diligent observer to have plain marks of being ordered and disposed so by the divine wise Providence. An atheist who can say, that this world was caused by unintelligent matter without a Providence, may on full as good grounds say, that the cities of *London*, *Paris*, or *Edinburgh* were made by a chance-

chance-jumbling of stones without a workman, or that the Books of the wise *Solomon*, the *Iliad* of *Homer*, or the *Eneid* of *Virgil*, were made by a chance-jumbling of letters without the direction of men. Indeed this would not be so ridiculous; for more faults may be found in these towns or books, than in the frame of this glorious world.

Every thing in this present system is disposed by Providence for the best, nothing whatsoever wants some good use. Often the same thing is disposed for a variety of glorious uses. How many uses have we for the several parts of our bodies? as our hands, eyes, tongue, &c. Yea, how many uses has every single muscle, and every bone? yet all these are not absolutely necessary for our subsistence. Every thing is done in the fittest manner: nothing so well suited to vision as the eye, to operation as the hand, to motion as the foot, or wing. 'Tis unaccountable, without the supposition of a Providence, that so many different parts should so fitly conspire to one common use, as are the parts which contribute to nutrition and motion in man and other animals. Here is every thing for ornament, but no useless expence. I must stop; but 'tis plain, that every thing in the frame of the world is so complete, that the wit of man is not capable of making the least improvement, and that all was disposed by divine Providence.

The other mean appointed by Providence for obtaining the end of creation, is, that admirable government of such parts as are furnished with life and action. This is different according to the diversity of its subjects, which are either rational or irrational. As to the latter, if we view the actions of brute beasts in general, we cannot say they are meer machines, doing only according to external impressions; for the actions of the meanest of them are wonderfully diversified. So that if we look to an ant-hill or bee-hive, we shall find them as differently employed as the inhabitants of a city, tho' they are at the same time beset with the same objects, and for aught appears, receive the same impressions from without. But as the actions of brutes are not the effects of mere mechanism, so they cannot proceed from reason

and liberty, as those of men, nor can they obey any moral law. Yet herein is the wise Providence of God manifested, that he has implanted in those creatures such an uniform principle of action, call it by what name you will, as directly tends to the advancing this end, the universal welfare of his creatures. But I cannot enlarge on this head: I hope here it appears there is a governing Providence.

The method of governing the rational world, is by laws; the foundation of this government is the absolute propriety of the creator in his creatures, antecedent to consent or contract; its original rule and standard is the nature and will of the governour, the supreme perfection of his wisdom, which cannot but immutably incline him to act in conformity to the states and capacities of his subjects, and to that original fitness and unfitness which is in the natures and circumstances of things. That there really is such a government, appears from this, that there are certain uniform dictates of reason, with reference to matters of highest concern to the welfare of intelligent creatures, of which every such creature, acting like himself, cannot be ignorant. These dictates are qualified to be a rule of the actions of creatures; but whatever appears qualified to be a rule of actions, can be no other than a law with reference to the design of the creator. Reason and liberty are the two principal necessary qualifications in the subjects of this government; without the former they cannot know their duty, and without the latter they cannot discharge it: without either in a sufficient degree, government by laws would be ridiculous. With both in a due perfection, they found in creatures an immediate obligation to obey their creator; and from this obligation arises the supposition of rewards and punishments, and of justice in proportioning and dispensing them by the supreme creator and governour.

If there were not such a Providence in the world, what dismal work would there be? Man would become more mischievous than the brutes; all virtues would degenerate into the contrary vices, or self-love. All men would be tyrants to the inferiour creatures; and so far as
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it were in their power, and for their interest, would be so to one another : in a word, every thing would tend to a state of war, confusion and destruction.

From all which it follows, that it would be unsuitable to the divine wisdom, and consequently impossible not to have such a government ; that 'tis necessary to the good of the creatures, and to the glory of the creator ; that there must be an equal and just distribution of rewards and punishments by the law-giver to the subjects, if not in this life, yet in a future state. In a word, that God by his Providence preserveth, disposeth and governeth all his creatures agreeably to their natures, for attaining the best ends.

Add to all this, the very wisest of the heathens acknowledged this divine Providence ; the Emperor *Mark Antonin* says *, *If there be no Gods, or if they take no care of human affairs, to what purpose do we live in the world, empty of God and his Providence ? Cicero*, that great orator and philosopher, expresses himself thus : *I assert, that by the Providence of the Gods, the world and all its parts were made at the beginning, and are always governed. This dispute we divide in three parts, whereof the first is to prove the existence of the Gods, which being confessed, we must also acknowledge that the world is guided by their administration* †. Does not Providence make itself sensible even to the most impious ? We see in all histories and revolutions of states and kingdoms, so surprizing and so unexpected turns of affairs, that the ablest politicians could not account for. The most secret crimes have been often strangely discovered ; our life has been exposed to so many dangers, in all appearance, unavoidable, from which it has been delivered by unforeseen means ; the afflictions that have been very grievous to us, have terminated

* Εἰ πῦρ ἔκ εἰπν, ἢ ἔ μέλει αὐτοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, πῶς μοι ζῆν ἐν κόσμῳ κενῷ Θεῶν, ἢ προνοίας κενῷ. Marcus Antoninus εἰς ἑαυτὸν. Lib. 2. §. 11.

† Dico igitur providentiâ deorum mundum, & omneis mundi parteis & initio constitutas esse, & omni tempore administrari: eamque disputationem treis in parteis nostri ferè dividunt: quarum pars prima est, qua ducitur ab ea ratione, quæ docet esse Deos, quo confesso, confitendum est eorum consilio mundum administrari. Cicero de natura Deorum, L. 2. C. 2.

terminated to our advantage; so as we cannot but in all these, and on many other occasions observe the visible tokens of the power, justice, and goodness of God, who holds all creatures in his own hand, and governs them according to his pleasure.

There have been, and still are many objections and difficulties started against this doctrine of Providence. I cannot now stay to discourse of the origin of evil, the liberty of man, and to vindicate the attributes of God, in his dispensations of Providence: In short, if there be any thing at all in these which we cannot fully account for, it must arise from the weakness of our poor finite minds, which cannot comprehend the ways of the infinite God. 'Tis impossible that there can be any real irregularity in divine Providence; and a proper time will come, when we shall be convinced, and all his dispensations will appear to be what they really and certainly are, just and righteous altogether.

I now proceed to another great fundamental article of Religion, the Immortality of the Soul. There are no subjects on which we can turn our thoughts, capable to afford us more pleasure, advantage and delight, than those which concern our Souls; and of all such subjects, none concern us more nearly, nor are more capable to advance so valuable ends, than that of our Immortality. This then very well deserves the strict and accurate enquiry of every one of us.

There are several sources from whence we might derive many strong arguments to convince us and all men, that our Souls are immortal: I shall a little argue from these following.

First, The Soul is immaterial, therefore 'tis immortal. That the first of these propositions is true, might be proved by a long chain of reasoning*; but I shall only prove briefly, that if the Soul were not immaterial, it would be absurd to suppose any variety or diversity of thought, or any inference or argumentation in our mind. Because, supposing our Souls to be made up of material

* See Ditton on the Resurrection, Pag. 489, &c. Appendix. Dr. Samuel Clark's *Letters to Mr. Dodwell*.

material particles, all our thoughts must arise from the motion of these particles ; that is, for every change of thought, there must be a change in the number of moving particles, in the direction, or in the quantity of their motion : for 'tis evident, that a cause working still the same way, would still produce the same effect, and our thought would be always the very same, if some change or other did not happen in these parts of matter. But by the hypothesis we oppose, this change must be caused by the impulse of some foreign matter ; there must therefore be some prior Mover to that, for 'tis plain that matter cannot change its state of rest into that of motion by itself, and another prior to the former, and so by an infinite progression : and this must be the case in every individual act of reasoning, on the very least change of thought ; which is so contrary to all true philosophy and common sense, that it cannot be endured. The soul therefore is immaterial.

Now that the Immateriality of the Soul does prove its Immortality, may appear, if we consider, *First*, That our souls and bodies being of quite different and opposite natures, however closely they may be united, can never suffer any mixture or confusion among themselves. *2dly*, That the soul being of a simple incorporeal substance, is not at all capable of a dissolution. *3dly*, That when the soul and body are disunited, the first of these is not dissolved ; nor is there the least shadow of reason to imagine that its being and activity is any way tied to the being and regular condition of the body. But, *4thly*, That on the contrary, we have reason to think, that as our Soul in its state of union, was always most noble and elevated, when it had least to do with, and was most abstracted from the body ; so now after its separation, being free from all these clogs and bodily indispositions, which less or more still attend it, during its union ; in this case we may justly think, that all its actions and thoughts will be exerted with far more freedom and sprightliness than when it was joined to the body. It is then certain the Soul is immortal, for that neither the body nor any of the laws of matter can have any influence to the contrary.

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2dly, That the Soul is immortal, may be demonstrated from the passions and sentiments of our souls: *I am persuaded, says Cicero **, by the quickness of thought, with which the Soul is endued, its wonderful memory of things past, and foresight of things to come, it has invented so many arts, so many sciences, and has made so many admirable discoveries, that it cannot be but immortal. This Soul cannot satisfy itself with earthly enjoyments, its love of existence is exceeding strong, it shuns the thoughts of annihilation with horror, and with the most eager inclinations aspires after Immortality. That the Soul is endued with such sentiments, is so evident, that I think it would be superfluous in me to prove it. I am confident this truth can run no risque, if I should by open appeal leave the confirmation of it to the consciences of men; to men, I say, who are not either prodigiously inconsiderate, unattentive, and so most stupidly ignorant, who are not quite misled by early, strong and foolish prejudices; or above all, who are not so entirely depraved by vicious habits, so wholly corrupted by debauched practices, that they either cannot, will not, or dare not think freely and calmly. Such people indeed are not to be dealt with, and I dare say all others both perceive well the foresaid sentiments, and will as freely own them.

Now, to prove the Immortality of the Soul from these its passions and sentiments, we must consider that the infinitely perfect Being, the Creator of all things, and particularly of man, has done all things wisely and well; the very brute beasts have a happiness proportioned to their faculties, they have the means, and actually obtain the enjoyment of those things to which their natural desires, planted in them by their Creator, strongly incline them: And therefore, if our Souls were not immortal, men would be on this account more miserable than brutes, in that they had not a happiness proportioned to their faculties, and could have no possible way to come at the enjoyment of those strong and ardent desires, so deeply fixed in them by their Creator. Yea, I
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* De Senectute, §. 78.

may add, that if we suppose the Soul not to be immortal, then the more excellent any one man were among the human kind, the more sagacious, just, wise, &c. so much more would he be miserable, and so much less incapable of happiness, because he would be the more sensible of his death, which so fast approaches; and this would sour all his present sensible happiness. The more wise he were, he would not only be more sensible of the shortness and uncertainty of his life, but of the poorness, insufficiency, and dissatisfactoriness of all such pitiful delights, since 'tis certain that a fool sets a greater value on sensible happiness, than a wise man; and so would be most, if not the only person, capable of true happiness. These things may persuade us of many absurd consequences of asserting the Soul to be a mortal perishing substance. Indeed the vast capacity of the Soul of man to recall things past, foresee things to come, and in a manner to give being to things that are not, to raise up itself to the heavens, and pant after them; to descend to the abyss, and sound the depth thereof; and tho' chained to a languishing body, yet to aspire after Immortality, may convince any man of the heavenly original of the Soul, that 'tis not formed to perish with a vile lump of matter, whose duration is so short and miserable, but is immortal, and endureth for ever.

Thirdly, The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, and consequently of its being capable to receive rewards and punishments in the life to come, is most profitable to the right government of men's lives and actions in the world, and the preserving society among them. If no happiness or misery is to be expected hereafter, then the only business men have to take care of, is their present well-being in the world: If a man be inclined to make gain, if he can cheat or steal, so as not to be punished by a civil or criminal judge; it will be so far from being his fault, that 'tis plainly his duty, because 'tis a proper mean to increase his plenty and opulent estate. And as to anger, hatred, revenge, or the like lusts, by this principle a man may take the first opportunity of satisfying these passions, by doing mischief to
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the person he is offended with, either by accusation, perjury, poisoning or stabbing, if he can do it, so as to escape the suspicion of others, and human penalties. What tygers, wolves, monsters in human shape would men be, if they might thus gratify their impetuous lusts, as oft as they could do it safely? The atheists themselves, while they own Religion is a politick invention, necessary for the right government of the world, grant the excellency of it, tho' they pretend otherwise; yet they are not so far out of their wits as to desire their wives, children or servants should be of the same opinion with them, for then they could have no security for their estate, honour or life. If any imagine the principle of honour may supply the room of conscience; I answer, this relates only to external reputation, and the esteem we have among others, and therefore can be of no influence to restrain men from secret mischief. God hath then in great wisdom added everlasting rewards to good men, and punishments to the wicked, as sanctions to his law, to influence men to obedience, from a tender regard to the good of their immortal souls.

Fourthly, The very heathens believed the Immortality of the Soul. *Seneca* expressly asserts it: * *We prove*, says he, *the Being of Gods from this among other arguments, that all people are of this opinion: there is no nation so rude without laws and manners, but they believe there are some Gods: when we dispute about the eternity or immortality of the soul, the general consent of men either fearing or worshipping the infernal powers, is of no small moment to us.* *Cicero* says †, *We do believe that the souls of men do abide after death, by the consent of all nations.* Both these eminent authors connect the doctrine of the Soul's Immortality with that of the existence of God, the one

* *Seneca Epist. 117. non longè ab initio. Deos esse, inter alia sic colligimus, quòd omnibus de diis opinio insita est: nec ulla gens usquam est adeò extra leges moresque projecta, ut non aliquos deos credat. Cum de animarum aternitate differimus, non leve momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum, aut timentium inferos, aut colentium.*

† *Tusc. quæst. lib. 1. cap. 16. Sed ut deos esse naturâ opinamur—— Sic permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium.*

one depending upon the other; and affirm all nations are of this opinion. Many other testimonies may be cited from the *Greek* philosophers and poets, to the same purpose, which the curious may find quoted by *Justin Martyr*, *Clemens of Alexandria*, and other ancient fathers. I do not here stay upon them, since the Immortality of the Soul we assert, appears evident and necessary from the arguments already adduced. And,

Fifthly, From the solid hopes good men have of future happiness: hence they have with a more than heroick courage endured the forest sufferings and most cruel deaths, for adhering to Religion, which does suppose, and is founded upon a strong persuasion of happiness in a future state, where their sufferings shall be rewarded with an eternal weight of glory; which hope shall not be in vain. On the other hand, wicked men, even tho' grandees in this earth, who did command armies, and gave laws to nations, cannot avoid the lashes of conscience, the terrors and fears of judgment and eternal misery to come. There is no creature below man that has any fears of this kind. If there be no real ground for these hopes or fears, it must follow, that God, who has framed all his other works so well for the end to which they are designed, did so contrive the nature of man, as to be a needless torment and burden to it self. If these impressions did flow only from education, the pains, a mocking atheistical generation takes, might be sufficient to extirpate them; but the contrary is found by experience. Our Creator has so engraven these truths upon the souls of men, as the impression can never be altogether razed out.

Lastly, The nature of the supreme Being, his wisdom, goodness and truth, affords the most undeniable arguments for the Soul's Immortality; but, to avoid prolixity and repetitions, I shall only lightly touch them. I say then, if the Soul of man were mortal, it would derogate mightily from the wisdom of God, to have made it with such unsuitable faculties as these it hath would be, were the Soul a perishing transient creature: this would argue more want of skill in God than is to be discerned in
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any good human artist, who is always sure to make his piece of workmanship suitable to the duration he designs it should have, and the sphere of activity he is to place it in. But 'tis evident, that the faculties of brute beasts are vastly inferior to those of the human Soul: what therefore is common to the beasts, as well as man, cannot be the end of man. The wisdom of God then must certainly suffer, if, as he appoints man to an end of his own designing, so he did not appoint him an end answerable to the excellency of his soul: an end as much above other creatures, as that exceeds them in worth and excellency, as was before hinted. But if our doctrine were false, we might not only impeach God's want of wisdom in making man, but also in his government of the world. What wise governour would allow, or, I may say, authorise such things, as would certainly breed the most horrid confusion in the government? And if God had made man to perish, soul and body, what destruction, disorder and ruin would not have naturally followed throughout all the world? No restraint, no bonds would have been on men. Or if a way can be found to defend his wisdom, how much must his goodness suffer, in having misled men, through all ages, in such a gross error, in having so deeply rooted in their minds the above-named idle, groundless, tormenting passions, in having persuaded many, by an invincible error, to a great deal of troublesome things, from the hopes of a reward after death, and in having hindered them from doing many things pleasant and grateful to their inclinations, from the fears of a punishment after death; and yet these hopes and fears must be mere deluding fancies. Or if we wrongfully accuse his goodness, how shall his truth and justice be saved? Shall good men, who to their inexpressible loss obeyed his laws, know of no reward after death? Shall all those promises which he made mankind rely on as Truth itself, be found to be nothing but deceit, couzenage and falshood? Shall all that justice, for which he made himself so famous, be at length discovered to be the basest treachery, iniquity and injustice? No, no; away with

with such blasphemous contradictions! Let us believe after the old, sure, demonstrated way, that God is most perfectly and superlatively wise; good, just and true; and, as is firmly demonstrated by this and the preceding arguments, that the souls of men are immortal.

The great Principles of Religion; the Existence, the Attributes, and the Providence of God, with the Immortality of the Soul, being thus demonstrated; the Duties incumbent on men do shine by a native consequence. The more general duties are, praise, thanksgiving, trust and prayer. Since God is our sovereign, infinitely perfect, who has made us, who has given us all we have, who can still do us good, supply all our necessities and wants, relieve us in all our troubles, and crown us with all the blessings of his goodness; 'tis highly reasonable we should admire his liberality, trust in his mercy, pray to him for what we need, and give thanks to him for what we receive. Even a heathen could say, *The nature of God may justly challenge the worship of men, because of his excellency, blessedness and eternity; for whatsoever excels, has upon that account a veneration due to it* *. There are several particular actions and services, which, by the light of nature and the consent of nations, have been proper to express the honour due to him; as setting apart particular persons, places and times for his worship. It has been the general practice of all nations to have among them a distinct office of men, set apart and consecrated to officiate in holy things, to assist the people in their publick worship, to instruct them in the doctrine and practice of religion, and to excite them to the performance of religious duties. Reason tells us, such men are like to have the greatest skill, who have made it their business and chief care, who are obliged to it by their office. 'Tis reasonable for men who are joined in civil societies, to join also for religious worship. In order to this, 'tis necessary there should be publick places

* Cicero de natura Deorum, Lib. I. §. 45. ——— Nam & præstans Deorum natura hominum pietate coleretur, cum & aterna esset & beatissima, habet enim venerationem justam quicquid excellit.

places and solemn times dedicated for such assemblies, which has been the practice of all civilized nations; and all this ought to be done with great submission and reverence.

The divine perfections do also discover what honour and service is due to God from his creatures. 'Tis necessary, in our present state, we should have something to depend upon, and have recourse to, for support and relief: man, at his best estate, being but a feeble and infirm creature, by reason of the weakness of his mind and disorder of his passions, 'tis folly to trust in himself; and 'tis no less to trust in creatures, which are so uncertain in their events, and so changeable in their dispositions. But seeing the glorious God perfectly understands our weakness, and all the proper remedies; since he is of such unquestionable goodness, love and faithfulness, to be concerned for us, and take care of us, of infinite power to relieve us in every condition, and everlasting, to be useful to us and our posterity in all generations: he is the only proper object of our trust and dependence.

Our love is also due to this God, to love his laws, his people, his worship, his precepts and commands, to esteem him and seek after him as our only happiness; since he is good in himself, the original of all good in the world, and good unto us, the author of our Being and Well-being. 'Tis also reasonable we should reverence and fear his name; that we have a humble and awful regard to his divine majesty, flowing from esteem and love to him, so as to be unwilling to do any thing which will argue a contempt of him, or provoke and offend him, but careful to do every thing that may please him. His sovereignty and dominion over us do claim our willing subjection to his laws, our observance of them, and conformity to them in our lives, with a patient submission to what he carves out for us.

Not only may the duties of piety toward God be deduced from those great principles of religion formerly demonstrated, but also the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures,

creatures, and to our selves, called righteousness and sobriety.

It has already been made evident, that God acts always according to the strictest equity, justice, goodness and truth, that is suitable to his own nature; and according to the eternal reason of things, 'tis impossible for him to be deceived or prejudiced. These creatures of his therefore, on whom he has bestowed liberty and reason, intolerably abuse these his gifts, when they either negligently suffer themselves to be deceived, or wilfully prejudiced in matters of good and evil, and so act contrary to God, and to those noble faculties he has endued them with, which will tend to their own hurt and ruin. Now, justice and equity to every man, to deal with him, as we in the like case would reasonably expect he would deal with us, is so plainly fit and reasonable in itself, that he who denies it, or acts contrary thereunto, most unaccountably abuses reason, acts contrary to his noble faculties, contrary to God, who, as he is perfectly just himself, cannot but abhor and punish all iniquity and injustice in reasonable creatures.

Universal love and benevolence to all men, is also a duty which flows from the same principles; for as God is just, so he is perfectly good, and always does what is best in the whole: so reasonable creatures ought to do not only what is fit and just, but also they ought to endeavour to do what is the greatest good; this must still be the most reasonable to be done. Now that love and benevolence, or a constant endeavour to promote the universal welfare of all men, is what most resembles and best pleaseth God, and is the greatest good we can do in our sphere, is so evident, that none can deny it, or be guilty of the contrary in practice, who has not his reasonable faculties most prodigiously and unnaturally corrupted.

Then, as to the duties we owe with respect to ourselves, 'tis clear that we ought to preserve our Being as long as we can; for we can have no just power or right to destroy what is God's work and gift: he alone has appointed us our work, and he only knows when it will be ended; and

therefore he only can dismiss us when all that work is done which he ordered for us. The *Apology* of Mr. *Gildon*, for *Blount's* abominable practice *, ought then to be hiss'd out of the rational world: and as we are like soldiers, who cannot quit our posts when we please, so we must always keep ourselves in a condition fit for performing the duties of our stations; and therefore we must do what we can to keep our reasonable faculties in good order, to regulate our passions and restrain our appetites, to keep free from all intemperance, either in body or mind: for when we are in such a condition, we are unfit for performing the necessary duties of life to which God calls us; and we are not secure, but that we may be led into the commission of all sorts of sins against God and our neighbours. We must therefore in a special manner take care to practise these duties, to preserve our Being as long as we are able, to keep ourselves always in a condition fit for our work, and to be diligent and satisfied in that particular station in which holy and wise Providence has placed us.

Tho' from the light of nature, especially after it has been cleared up to us by divine revelation, and improved by education, we may deduce such consequences, as have been already insisted upon; yet natural religion, without the help of divine revelation, can never conduct men to eternal happiness: in order to satisfy ourselves in this point, we must look mainly into the writings of those, who never had the benefit of divine revelation. The account we shall give, in the sequel of this book, of the state of idolatry among the *Gentiles*, and the best notions their religion furnished them with, for the service of God, may demonstrate this. But to prove the insufficiency of natural religion, and the necessity of divine revelation, I shall offer the following considerations; and I may be excused if I stay a little upon them, because they may be of use to us in the following part of this essay, to discover the vanity of heathenism, and the unspeakable advantages we have by divine revelation.

First,

* Preface to *Blount's* Oracles of Reason.

First, Religion does import that veneration or regard which is due from the rational creature, in the whole course of his life, to the supereminently excellent Being, his Creator, Preserver, Lord, and Benefactor *. This veneration must be upon the account of his supereminent excellencies, his absolute and independent sovereignty, his creation, preservation, and other benefits bestowed upon us; we must love him with a love superior to that we give to any creature. Would our king be pleased, if we paid him no more respect than we do his servant? In order then to serve God acceptably, we must have a distinct and particular knowledge of him. To engage me to trust in God, I must know his power, be persuaded that he knows, and is willing to take care of me. To engage me to pray to him, I must be persuaded of his omniscience to know my desires, and of his ability and willingness to supply my wants. To engage me to love him, I must know the amiableness of his perfections; and to pay him obedience, I must know his authority, and the laws that are to be the rule of my actions. Now the heathens, by the dark light of nature, had no such knowledge of God: they could scarce spell out his name, by the works of creation and providence, without revelation. To be sure the vulgar could not do it, when their greatest philosophers were so grossly ignorant in these matters. 'Tis amazing that they, who were such giants in all other kinds of learning, should prove such dwarfs in divinity, that they might go to school to get a lesson from the most ignorant Christians, who knew any thing at all. Justly said the Apostle *Paul*, *in wisdom they knew not God*; their knowledge was plain ignorance. *Cicero*, who collected the opinions of other philosophers, in his books, *De natura Deorum*, as of *Thales*, *Socrates*, *Solon*, *Protagoras*, *Diagoras*, &c. says †, *Those who assert the Being of the Gods, run into such a variety and difference of opinions, that is troublesome to report: they say so many different things, of the shapes of the Gods, of their places, seats*

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* *Haliburton's Natural Religion* insufficient, Pag. 45.

† *De natura Deorum*, Lib. 1. §. 2. *Qui vero Deos esse dixerunt tantâ sunt in varietate ac dissensione, &c.*

and actions; of their lives, (about which there is great dissension amongst philosophers) and which touches the point more nearly, some of them affirm the Gods do nothing, are free of all government and care of affairs: Others, that all things were made from the beginning, and regulated and moved for an infinite time. What mis-shapen notions are these? Beside, an endless variety of opinions, whereby they say and unsay, are wavering and uncertain. Cicero himself never adventured to give any methodical account; he scarce establishes any thing, but spends his whole time in refuting the opinions of others, without daring to advance his own. *Have you forgot, says he *, what I told you in the beginning, that 'tis easier for me to tell you what is not my opinion, than what it is.* The best theology of the heathen sages is but dark hints, which the vulgar did not understand. Scarce any of them is positive, that there are no more Gods than one. Even Socrates himself, who is supposed to have died a martyr to this truth, durst not own it plainly. While this is undetermined, all religion is left loose and uncertain, and men cannot know how to distribute their veneration to several deities.

Secondly, The light of nature is insufficient to direct us in the worship of God, which consists not only in the acts of the mind, as esteem, fear, love, but in a more stated and solemn way of veneration. Mankind, as united in societies, depends intirely upon God, and therefore owe him reverence, and all suitable expressions of it. Publick benefits require publick acknowledgments; the deists themselves own this. Now the nations that were left to the mere light of nature, were filled with blasphemous, ridiculous and unworthy rites of worship; yea, some of them were impious and abominable, as we may see afterward, in the second chapter of this essay. We cannot any where in the heathen world see any worship that is not manifestly unworthy of, and injurious to the glory of God. That
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* Idem ibid. Lib. 2. §. 2. *Oblitus es, quod initio dixerim, facilius me, talibus praesertim de rebus, quid non sentirem, quam quid sentirem, posse dicere?*

light that suffered the world so far to lose their way, must be sadly defective. What did they know about either the matter or manner of prayer or praises? What security did, or could nature's light afford of the success and acceptance of these duties? *Plato*, in his second *Alcibiades*, makes it his business to prove that we know not how to manage Prayer, and therefore concludes it safer to abstain altogether, than err in the manner of performance. *Epictetus* says, *Everyone must sacrifice and offer the first-fruits according to the manner of their country* *. *Seneca* condemns this, and says, *Deum colit qui novit, let those that know God worship him* †. Remarkable is the confession of *Jamblicus*, a *Platonick* philosopher in the first century ‡; 'Tis not easy to know what God will be pleased with, unless we be either immediately instructed by God ourselves, or taught by some person God has conversed with, or arrive at the knowledge of it by some divine means or other. If these great men were in so great uncertainty, what was the case of the rest of the pagan world?

Thirdly, Nature's light is not able to give any discovery wherein man's chief happiness consists, or how it is attainable. The *Gentile* philosophers have split upon this point, into an endless variety of opinions; *Varro* reckons no less than 288. If the discoveries of nature's light were sufficient to happiness, there could be no longer such contention and difference about the chief good; every man might know and rest satisfied with it. Such a confusion of opinions is a certain argument of darkness. The *Epicureans* placed the chief good in pleasure; *Solon*, in the enjoyment of outward things; *Socrates*, in knowledge; *Zeno*, in living according to nature. The *Epicurean* opinion encouraged sensuality; and no wonder, for tho' they granted the Being of God, yet they denied his Providence, which does restrain vice, and encourage virtue. The *Stoicks*, tho' they granted a divine Providence, yet they maintained such a fatal necessity, not only in the effects of human actions, but in the actions themselves, as

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* *Enchiridion*, cap. 38. pag. m. 56.

† *Epist.* 95. pag. m. 228.

‡ *De vita Pythagoræ*, cap. 28.

thereby they blunted the edge of all virtuous endeavours, and made an excuse for vitious practices. 'Tis evident none of these people knew that happiness consists in the eternal enjoyment of God. If we were to expect such a discovery among the heathens, we might look for it among those who have not by the by, but as their main purpose, discoursed of moral philosophy, and the ends of human life, as *Cicero* and *Seneca*. *Cicero* tells us *, he designed to enrich his native country with a translation of what is most valuable in the *Greek* philosophers. With this design he sets himself to write, *de finibus bonorum & malorum*, of moral ends good or evil, in five books. Here we might expect to find wherein man's happiness does consist; but if we do, we are disappointed. The first book sets off *Epicurus's* opinion about happiness with a great deal of rhetorick. The second overthrows it, shewing our felicity does not consist in pleasure. The third represents the *Stoicks* opinion. The fourth confutes it. The fifth represents and asserts the *Peripateticks* opinion, which had been as easily confuted as any of the rest. And this is all we are to expect from *Cicero*, without one word of God, or of the life to come. *Seneca* writes a book *de vita beata*, of a happy life, in 32 chapters; from his state of the question we might expect great matters: *Let us enquire*, says he †, *what is best to be done, not what is most customary; what will bring us to the possession of eternal happiness, not what is approved by the vulgar, the worst interpreter of truth.* But after this, I assure you, you need look for no more words of *Eternity*, but only a jejune discourse, with some pretty sentences about the *Stoicks* opinion, that a man would be happy if his passions were extinct, and were perfectly pleased with the condition he is in, be what it will. Yea, he commends *Diodorus*, the *Epicurean*, who killed himself, saying ‡, *This happy man, full of a good conscience, gave a testimony to himself when dying.* After this, can we dream that nature's light is sufficient to discover the way to true happiness? Can the

* De finibus, lib. 1. ab initio.

† De vita beata, cap. 2.

‡ Ibidem, cap. 19. operum pag. m. 351.

the vulgar sort of people discover that which the greatest philosophers, after the most serious application, failed to do? 'Tis true, *Plato* and *Cicero* have given such arguments for the immortality of the soul, as the atheists cannot answer; yet when compared with the performances of Christian writers, they are but like the trifles of a boy at school, laid in the ballance with the elaborate performances of great masters. Their arguments did rather beget a suspicion than a firm and steady belief, as the ingenuous auditor in *Cicero* acknowledges*; *While I read the arguments of Plato, I assent*, says he; *but when I lay by the book, and think with myself of the immortality of the soul, I know not how this assent all vanishes.* But still they had no discovery of the nature of the happiness of immortal souls, wherein it consists, or of its excellency and suitableness, to engage men to desire and pursue after it as the chief good: No view of the glorious recompense of reward, of the everlasting enjoyment of our Redeemer, and singing his praises in glory, as we Christians have by the invaluable advantage of divine revelation.

In the *fourth* place, As the Light of nature cannot discover our happiness, so neither does it clear up the way that leads to it. It cannot be a complete directory to guide a man in the way of holiness, and bring him to everlasting life. Mr. *Locke* has well discoursed the point, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures* †: *So much virtue as was necessary to hold societies together, and to contribute to the quiet of the governments, the civil laws of common-wealths taught, and forced on men who lived under magistracy; but these laws being for the most part made by such, who had no other aim but their own power, reached no further than those things that would tie men together, or conduce to the temporal prosperity of the people. But natural religion, in its full extent, was nowhere, that I know, taken care of by the force of natural reason; it should seem by the little that has been hitherto done, 'tis too hard for unassisted reason to establish morality*
in

* *Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1. §. 25.*† *Pag. 268.*

in all its parts, upon its true foundation, with a clear and convincing light. It would be a difficult task to gather the scattered shreds of the heathen moralists into a body ; but tho' it were done, it would not be a system any way useful to mankind. It would consist for most part of enigmatical, dark and involved sentences, that would need a commentary too large to peruse, to make them intelligible. Of what use would it be to read such morality as the sayings of *Pythagoras*? *Poke not the fire with a sword: Stride not over the beam of a ballance: Eat not the heart: Carry not the image of God about with you in a ring**. Many of the sayings of philosophers, recorded by *Diogenes Laertius*, are of the same kind. The pagan morality is very defective, many necessary duties are wanting ; it never teaches the duty of self-denial, to subject all our concerns to the honour of God, and to depend upon him alone for assistance, and acceptance in our best performances. Nature's light does not direct us to forgive our enemies, to love them and pray for them ; does not regulate our thoughts, designs, and the frame of our soul. These things go above the view of unenlightened nature ; we are obliged to divine relation for the discovery of them.

The heathen morality is not only defective and lame, but also corrupt and pernicious. *Epicetus* bids you † *temporise, and worship the Gods after the fashion of your country.* *Pythagoras* ‡ *forbids you to pray to God, because you know not what is convenient.* *Cicero* defends *Brutus* and *Cassius* for killing *Julius Cæsar*, and thus authorises the murder of supreme magistrates, if the actors can persuade themselves they are tyrants: thus no prince could be secure either of his crown or dignity. We may find *Plutarch* commending *Cato Uticensis* for killing himself amidst philosophick thoughts, with resolution and deliberation, after reading *Plato* on the immortality of the soul||. *Cicero* pleads for self-murder ; herein he was seconded by *Brutus*,

* *Diogenes Laertius's* Life of *Pythagoras*.

† *Enchiridion*, cap. 38. pag. m. 56.

‡ *Diog. Laertius*.

|| *Plutarch's* Life of *Cato*, near the End,

Brutus, Cassius, Seneca and others: these practised it; many of their learned men applauded their opinion and practice. The modern deists justify it, in the preface to *Blount's* oracles of reason. *Seneca* pleads for it thus *: *If thy mind be melancholly and in misery, thou mayst put a period to this wretched condition; wherever thou lookest, there is an end to it: see that precipice, there thou mayst have liberty; seest thou that sea, that river, that well? liberty is at the bottom of it: that little tree? freedom hangs upon it. Thy own neck, thy own throat may be a refuge to thee from such servitude, yea, every vein of thy body.* Ah wretched morality! we may find in the heathen philosophers customary swearing commended, if not by their precepts, yet by the examples of their best moralists, *Plato, Socrates, Seneca* and *Julian* the Emperor, in whose works numerous instances of oaths, by *Jupiter, Hercules, the Sun, Serapis*, and the like, do occur. In the same manner we may see the unnatural love of boys recommended. *Aristotle* practised it, and *Socrates* is wronged, if he was not guilty of the same; hence came the proverb of *Socratici Cinnædi* in *Juvenal's* days †. *Lucian* makes no secret of it ‡, yea in his discourse, entitled ἐρώτες ||, we have a long discourse of one *Callicratidas*, vindicating and commending this infamous love, as more becoming a philosophick mind; insinuating it was the common practice of *Greek* philosophers, and permitted to them. What abominable opinions are these of *Aristippus* **? *That he did not think it rational that a virtuous man should hazard himself for his country; for it was not fit that he should throw away his prudence for the folly and miscarriages of others; beside, the whole world is his country. That it was lawful for a wise man to steal, commit adultery, and sacrilege, when opportunity offered; for that none of these actions were naturally evil, setting aside the vulgar opinion, which was introduced into the world by silly and illiterate people. That a wise*
man

* De Ira, lib. 3. cap. 15. pag. m. 319.

† Juvenal. Satyr. 2. ver. 10.

‡ Luciani opera, vitarum initio, Tom. 1. pag. m. 379. παιδεγαστὴς αὐτοῦ σόφου τὰ ἐρωτικά.

|| Luciani amores, operum Tom. 1. pag. m. 895. & seqq.

** Diog. Laertius, Vol. 1. pag. m. 165, 166.

man might publickly, without shame or scandal, keep company with common harlots, if his inclinations led him to it. May not a beautiful woman be made use of, because she is fair; or a youth, because he is lovely? Certainly they may, says he. No wonder the heathen world was debauched, when the philosophers, the oracles of those times, taught them such impious lessons.

Pride and Self-esteem were among the virtues, which rendered their best morality unfavoury. Seneca says *, *Let a man be pure, not overcome by any external accidents, admiring only himself.* And again he says †, *A wise man can bear all things, with as equal a temper of mind as Jupiter himself; yea, in this he exceeds, that Jupiter cannot use those things a wise man will not.* This was a stupendous effect of pride, to prefer themselves to the Gods they worshipped. None of these philosophers proposed the honour of their Gods, as the chief end of their actions, nor so much as dreamed of it; all their aim was, to set up a pillar to their own fame. The known sentence of Cicero justifies this, *Vult planè virtus honorem, nec virtutis ulla alia merces*: Virtue aims at honour, neither has it any other reward. And particularly he says ‡, *We are all moved by the desire of praise, the best of men are led by that which tends to their own glory; the philosophers themselves in those books which they write, of contemning glory, inscribe their own names.*—— Virtue desires no other reward of all the labours and dangers it undergoes, but this of praise and glory. If this, O judges, be taken away, what is it, for which in this little course of our life we exercise ourselves with so many labours? Seneca talks like a profane heathen, when he says ||, *Let philosophy minister this to me, that it render me equal with God.* And Cicero, *Deum te igitur scito esse*, know thy self to be a God **. Yea, in another place he will not allow that the praise of our being good and virtuous should be ascribed to God. For, says he

* De vita beata, cap. 8. pag. m. 346.

† Epist. 73. pag. 164.

‡ Oratio pro Archia, §. 26, 28.

|| Epist. 48. pag. 128.

** Somnium Scipionis, prope finem.

he*, the Gods neglect little things, take no care of our asses or vines, no body owns they have virtue from God, and they are in the right; for we are justly praised for our virtue, and glory in it, which could not be, if we had that gift from the Gods, and not from ourselves. Thus, and more to this purpose, speaks this famous author, which I need not transcribe. Were all the pagan morality gathered together, it would be full of endless contradictions, one condemning as abominable what another commends and praises. The curious may read enough of this in the works of the ancient fathers against the Gentiles, particularly in *Hermias's Irrisio Gentilium Philosophorum*, to be found at the end of *Justin Martyr's* works, in the edition at *Cologne* 1686. Mr. *Locke*, in his *Essay on Human Understanding*, remarks †, *We may see it has been customary in some nations to expose their children, to bury them alive without scruple, to fatten them for slaughter, kill them and eat them, dispatch their aged parents, and eat their enemies; yea, they expected paradise as a reward of these abominable practices.* Such fatal mistakes prove the insufficiency of nature's light, to afford us a rule of our duty: if they erred so shamefully in the clearest cases, how shall we expect direction in those that are more intricate?

To conclude this argument, these ancient sages have no authority; were *Zeno* or *Aristippus* law-givers to mankind, men might either hearken to their dictates, or reject them, as they suited their interests, passions, principles or humours; they were under no obligation. If consequences are to be drawn from the dictates of nature, how can youth or children do this? Yet there must be a knowledge of the rule before we can act conformable to it. To be sure then, the only method to direct us in our duty, and to prevent declining to the paths of folly and wickedness, is the law of God set before us in his written word, as a *light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths.*

Fifthly, The light of nature gives no sufficient arguments to enforce obedience; it does not discover the excellency and authority of the law-giver, nor the advantage

* *De natura Deorum*, lib. 3. §. 85; 86.

† *Book 1. Chap. 3. §. 9.*

tage we have by his providence, care and inspection, by his wisdom, justice, mercy and goodness, by his redeeming love, and communications of his grace. Neither does it discover the profit and pleasure of holiness in this present life, to excite us to cross our vitious inclinations from the prospect of communion with God, peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost: Nor can it afford such noble examples of purity, holiness and virtue as those of our blessed Redeemer, of the Apostles, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and cloud of witnesses; the best of the heathens, when compared with these, are but monsters in human shapes, not to be named with them in the same day. Nor can the light of nature give any full view of the glorious eternal heavenly reward, prepared for the saints, nor of the eternal punishments provided for the disobedient. What the Gentiles talked of the *Elysian Fields*, and of the punishments in *Pluto's* kingdom, of *Styx*, *Lethe*, *Cerberus*, *Charon*, &c. were made so ridiculous by the poets fictions, as the wisest of the heathens believed them not. *Cicero* was persuaded they were mere fictions of poets and painters *, not worthy of a refutation. *Lucian* laughs at them †.

Sixthly, The light of nature gives no clear discoveries of the origin of sin, tho' 'tis clear, as the sun shines, that the world lies in wickedness, that the creation groans under it, the very heathens complain of it. Any body who does not stop his ears, shut his eyes, stifle his conscience, and abandon reason, may see the world full of idolatry, blasphemy, pride, revenge, perjury, rapes, adulteries, thefts, robberies, murders, and other abominable evils; all which spring from the universal and contagious corruption that is in man. Nevertheless, the heathen world, who had only the light of nature, knew nothing of the rise of this. I shall *first* shew, that 'tis necessary to know the origin of evil; *next*, that the light of nature does not discover it. 'Tis of great importance to know the origin of evil, to understand that man was created with a perfect rectitude of mind in a state of integrity,

* Tusc. quæst. lib. 1. §. 10; 11.

† Luciani Dialogi Deorum, Necyomantia, and other Treatises.

tegrity, yet subject to the law which God gave him; which law man broke, and thereby became liable to the miseries God denounced against the breakers thereof, to death, and every evil; yea, lost that rectitude of mind God gave him, and became corrupt and wicked. That to know this, is most necessary, appears, because, *first*, if this be not known, we can never make any right estimate of the evil of sin; if men by their original constitution, without their own fault, be made of so wicked and infirm a nature, as that either they were inclined to, or unable to resist the temptations, among the throng of which they were placed, 'tis impossible for them to look on sin to be so detestable as really it is, or blame themselves so much for it, as they ought to do. But since it was otherwise, that man being originally made upright, did fall into misery by his own fault, 'tis certain quite other apprehensions of sin should be maintained, and great care should be used to prevent, or get it removed. *2dly*, If the origin of sin is not understood, we can never know what measures to take in subduing our corrupt inclinations, if we know not of what nature they are, and how they come to be so interwoven with our frame, of a piece with ourselves, we shall not know where to begin attempts for reformation; and yet this must be done, else we cannot expect happiness. *3dly*, If the origin of evil be not known, we shall be at a loss what thoughts to entertain of God's holiness, justice, goodness and wisdom. If our natures were so wicked in our first constitution, as now we find them, we shall scarce be able to entertain such a high regard for the divine perfections, or to give any tolerable account of the equity of his proceedings, in subjecting the world to such a train of miseries. *4thly*, If the origin of sin is not known, we shall be at a loss to understand what estimate God will make of sin; whether he'll look on it as such an evil, as to merit any deep punishment, or otherwise. Hence, *5thly*, it follows, that the whole state of our affairs with God will be darkned, and become unintelligible, if we understand not the source of our corruption. We shall not know, if God will animadvert so heavily on us for our sins as to ruin us, or slightly pass

pass over them, so as not to call us to an account : if the latter is supposed, our obedience to the law of God is ruined, considering what man's inclinations and temptations are ; who will obey, if no hurt or ruin is to be feared by sin ? If the former be supposed, our hope is ruined ; we shall not know what value God will put on our obedience, if he'll reject it for sinful defects, cleaving thereto, or if he'll pardon us, or upon what terms.

Now, none of the heathens, none of those who had only the light of nature, did understand any thing to purpose of the origin of evil. *Plutarch* tells us, *That those renowned philosophers *, the Pythagoreans, called the principle of good, unity ; finite, quiescent, uneven number, square, right, splendid. The principle of evil, they called binary, infinite, moving, crooked, even, long of one side, unequal, left, obscure.* These things are unintelligible jargon. Not a whit better is the opinion of two anti-gods, related also by *Plutarch*, who says, many ancient wise men think †, *there were two Gods, whose office is quite opposite, the one author of all good things, the other of all evil.* Others, with *Plato*, reckoned vitiosity inherent in matter. The reason of this darkness, as *Dr. Stillingfleet* observes ‡, was, *tho' they saw, by continual experience, how great a torrent of sin and punishment did overflow the world, yet they were like the Egyptians, who had sufficient evidence of the overflowings of the river Nile, but could not find out the spring or head of it. The reason was, that as corruption increased in the world, so the means of knowledge and instruction decayed ; as the Phænomena grew greater, so the reason of them was less understood. The knowledge of the history of the first ages of the world, through which alone they could come to the full understanding of the true cause of evil insensibly decaying in several nations, insomuch as those who were not acquainted with the sacred history of the Jews, had nothing but obscure traditions preserved among them ; which, while they sought to rectify by their interpretations, they made them more obscure than they*

* *Plutarch's Treatise of Isis and Osiris, in his Morals, pag. m. 1307.*

† *Plutarch's Treatise of Isis and Osiris, in his Morals.*

‡ *Origines Sacrae, Book 3. §. 8. pag. m. 487.*

they found them. True it is, some more modern philosophers, as *Hierocles*, *Porphyry*, *Simplicius*, do ascribe the origin of evil not to matter but to the will of man. But these men were * ἐκ τῆς ἱερᾶς συνᾶς of the sacred school of *Ammonius* at *Alexandria*; here *Herennius*, *Origen* and *Plotinus* were taught, and from them *Porphyry*, *Jamblicus*, *Hierocles* and others: tho' they write sometimes more clearly of the degeneracy of men's souls from God, and the way of the soul's returning to him, than the ancient philosophers who lived before our Redeemer's incarnation; it is to be considered they were taught by *Ammonius* at *Alexandria*, who lived and died a Christian, as *Eusebius* † and *Jerom* ‡ assure us; and did communicate to his scholars the sublimer mysteries of divine revelation, together with the speculations of ancient philosophers. But these *Platonicks* continuing heathens, tho' they grew rich with the spoils taken out of the sacred Scriptures, yet were loth to let it be known whence they had them; as even *Plato* himself did before them, who by means of his abode and acquaintance in *Egypt*, about the time when the *Jews* began to flock thither, had more certain knowledge of many truths of great importance concerning the deity, the nature of the soul, and the origin of the world, than many of the *Greek* philosophers. But here lay his fault, he wrapped up and disguised his notions in such a fabulous manner, that it might be less known whence they were borrowed, and that they might find better entertainment among the *Greeks*, than they were like to do in their native dress. || *Tertullian* well observed, *Which of the poets or sophists has not drunk knowledge at the sacred fountain of the prophets? Thence the philosophers did quench the thirst of their engine.* Indeed they came thither rather to please the itch of their curiosity, than to cure their malady. Upon the whole, reason can never trace the origin of sin to its proper source,

* *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ*, pag. 506.

† *Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 19.*

‡ *De Scriptoribus in Ammonio.*

|| *Apolog. cap. 47. pag. m. 52. Quis poetarum, quis sophistarum, qui non omnino de prophetarum fonte potaverit? inde igitur philosophi sitim ingenii sui rigaverant.*

source, our conscience may condemn us and acquit the deity; but without revelation we can never understand upon what grounds we are condemned, or how the deity is to be justified; nor what is the proper remedy to deliver us from the universal corruption that has infected us, and defiled our whole nature.

Seventhly, As nature's light cannot discover the origin of our corruption, so neither can it discern the means of obtaining the pardon of sin. Sin is the greatest evil imaginable, 'tis a transgression of the highest law of the supreme and righteous governour of the world; it contradicts the design of man's being, makes him not to please God but himself, and debases the being and powers given him for the honour of God, by employing them in contradiction to his declared will. It dethrones God, and sets up the creature in his room; the will of the Creator and creature cross one another, and the latter is preferred. But who can declare the evil of sin, that strikes against infinite goodness, holiness, justice, wisdom, and supreme authority, and ruins man in time and to eternity? Well therefore may it be said to be infinitely evil. Now, all mankind being guilty of sin, 'tis of the last and highest importance, to know if God will pardon, and upon what terms he will do it; if he refuse to pardon, and certainly punish with such infinite punishment as sin deserves, how miserable shall we be?

But so it is, that reason, not enlightned by divine revelation, can never satisfy any man in this case. Can the light of nature without revelation, give any rational satisfaction to these or the like questions? If, considering the greatness of sin, the justice, wisdom, and holiness of God, and the honour of his government, 'tis consistent to pardon any sin? If it be, whether he will pardon all, many or few sins? What sins, or what degrees of sin will God forgive? If he'll pardon without a reparation to the honour of his laws, and without suitable satisfaction to his infinitely offended justice? If he require reparation and satisfaction, what it is, and by whom it is to be performed? How obtain we a right to this satisfaction? If he pardon, will he remit all punishment due to

to sin, or how much? How shall we know that our sins in particular are pardoned? Will he merely pardon, or will he over and above re-admit to grace, and to as intire favour, as before man sinned? Will he not only pardon, but also reward the sinner's imperfect obedience? The revelation of the word of God in the Gospel, will furnish us with a rational answer to all these queries; but the mere light of nature can never resolve them. They are not only above the reach of natural reason, but it belongs not to man to decide them. The offence is committed against God; he alone understands what the contempt of his authority, the disorder brought into his government by sin, and the disobedience of his creature amounts to. He alone is judge what is proper to be done in this case; at his tribunal 'tis to be tried; man is too ignorant, too guilty, and too partial in his own favour, to be allowed judge. The light of nature does no where afford us the decision of God in this matter. In the works of Creation 'tis not to be found. The works of Providence give examples of patience in forbearing some sinners, and of justice in punishing others with temporary strokes; but determine nothing as to divine remission. The consciences of men read them sometimes sad lectures of divine justice, but if they be not informed by the word of God, they can give no discoveries of forgiveness. The profane and inhuman sacrifices of the heathens, of which we shall give account in the following chapter, prove they knew nothing of it. Tho' the divine mercy be infinite, yet it is regulated by his wisdom and pleasure, and what is for his own honour: a reparation must be had to the honour of the divine laws, and a satisfaction to offended justice; and what that is, or how 'tis to be had, the light of nature does no where discover. 'Tis the word of God only that explains the satisfaction of Christ the son of God, our Redeemer, in our room.

Eighthly, Tho' the inclination of men run universally early, and with great force upon sin, leading us to be proud, revengeful, ambitious, passionate, lustful, yet the light of nature does not give any sufficient means to root out these inclinations to sin, or subdue its power.

While corruption remains unsubdued, 'tis impossible for man to reach happiness, or to be sure of acceptance with God. Nature is corrupt, man out of order; reason is kept under, the brutal part bears sway: there's continual occasion for remorse, checks, challenges of conscience, and fears of the resentment of a holy God. There can be no firm confidence of access to God, or near fellowship with him, while we entertain his enemies in our bosom, yea have them interwoven with our natures. The heathens gave no sufficient rules to reform our nature, or subdue our corruptions. We have heard in the same chapter how defective and lame, yea how hurtful and pernicious their morality was, and we may hear more of it in the sequel of this essay. The deists give as few solid rules to this purpose: yea the Lord Herbert their patron and founder says *, *As you would not accuse a man sick of a lethargy, of laziness; or one that's hydropick, of immoderate thirst: so we must not censure a man prompted by passion, or by lust, of the evil he commits; the blame may be more commodiously laid on the redundancy of peccant humours, than on an ill habit.* This divinity will please profane men to a degree, and afford a handsome excuse for the worst of vices. But the Christian Religion informs us of the saving work of regeneration, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit of Grace, of the great duties of piety towards God, righteousness towards men, and sobriety towards ourselves, of the mortification of sin, and holiness of life; of the best means to assist us in this work; of the influences of the Spirit of Grace, of the noblest examples to excite us, and the greatest rewards to encourage us to promote holiness in the fear of the Lord. Upon the first appearance of Christianity in the world, innumerable multitudes of men became moral, pious and holy, which the dictates of philosophy could never do. What did the best rules of pagan morality, but dam up corruption upon one side, and let it run out in another with greater force, to make that run in a secret channel that run open before? How

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* Lord Herbert de veritate, apud Halyburton's Natural Religion insufficient, pag. 206.

corrupt and defective the best heathen philosophy is, we may see in *Theophilus Gale's Court of the Gentiles*, Part III. and many other authors. The best of it was but *vain deceit, intruding into those things they had not seen, vainly puff'd up with a fleshly mind*; it could neither subdue vice, nor promote true piety.

Ninthly, That natural Religion cannot conduct us to everlasting happiness, does appear from the experience of all men. Let us view man as made for this noble end, to glorify God and enjoy him, and left to pursue this in the use of his rational faculties, under the conduct of the mere light of nature, we shall find the experience of the world confirms the insufficiency of this light to reach this end. As to the generality of mankind, we may find them pursuing other things than their great end, walking in contradiction to the law designed to conduct them to happiness. Look to philosophers, we may see them rising early and sitting late on their notions, yet none of them understanding true happiness. Instead of giving plain rules to mankind, they obtrude obscure, dark, unprofitable sentences. How can nature's light remove darkness, guilt, and corruption? Without divine revelation men *walk in darkness and have no light*. And as to guilt, tho' they try all ways that fear, terrors, a racked imagination, yea that *Satan* could suggest, offering sometimes *the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul*, yet they never took the right way to deliver themselves from it, nor to subdue lust and stem the tide of corruption; tho' God did forbear to punish them, yet *their hearts were fully set in them to do evil*. As for the deists, who trust to the sufficiency of nature's light, and mock at Divine Revelation, neither their principles nor practices declare they are in the right road to obtain happiness. As for men who live under the Gospel, and are strangers to the power of godliness, tho' they have great advantages of means beyond others, yet their practice declares, that without the efficacy of divine grace, they can never enter into the *strait and narrow road that leads unto life*. And *finally*, as to true believers, they both in their publick and private devotions acknowledge their guilt, darkness

ness and inability, and send up earnest prayers, cries and tears for rich supplies of grace, without which they can do nothing.

In the *last* place, That the light of nature is insufficient in itself to conduct men to happiness, is evident, because all the religions that have been invented by men are absurd, and contrary to reason. The religion of the *Jews* taught in the Old Testament, before the incarnation of our SAVIOUR, and the Christian Religion taught in the New Testament since his coming, are not the inventions of men, but founded upon Divine Revelation. The principal ways of religious worship, devised by men, are the Heathenish and the *Mahometan*. How absurd and unreasonable heathenism was, beside what has been already advanced, I shall discover more fully in a chapter by it self: only here in as few words as I can, I shall shew how absurd the religion of *Mahomet* is, and how just grounds we have to reject it.

First, From the life of *Mahomet*, the founder and contriver thereof. He was born of mean parents, educated to merchandize by his uncle *Abu Taleb*. Being employed afterward as factor to a rich widow, he insinuated so into her favour, as she gave herself to him in marriage. Being thus render'd master of her person and estate, he was equal in riches to the best of the city, and his ambitious mind began to entertain thoughts of possessing the sovereignty. Having weigh'd all means to bring this to pass, he found none so probable, as framing that imposture, which he afterward vented with so much mischief to the world. The circumstances of the time and place did much favour the spreading of this delusion; for the *Arabians* were ignorant, superstitious *Gentiles*, worshipping Idols, *Alat*, *Az*, and *Menat*, as the *Alcoran* speaks*, and tainted with many other superstitions. The Christians, who were not many in that country, were mightily rent into parties, by the heresies of *Nestorius* and *Eutyches*. An inundation of superstition and ignorance had crept in among them, and the purity of religion was under great decay.

* Chap. 53.

decay. About the same time the bishop of *Rome*, by virtue of a grant from the tyrant *Phocas*, did usurp the title of *Universal Pastor*, or Head of the Christian Church. Thus Antichrist did set his foot in the western and eastern parts of the christian world at the same time. *Mahomet* or *Mohamed* did about the 38th year of his age withdraw from his former trade, and retired to the cave *Hira*; where, as he pretended, he conversed with the Angel *Gabriel*, and in the 40th year of his age he assumed the title of the Apostle of God, and under that character begun to propagate his imposture, but privately, having very few profelytes. Some designed to have put a stop to his project, but *Abu Taleb* his uncle defeated their designs. Being safe under his protection, he boldly published some chapters of the *Alcoran*. The main arguments he made use of to delude the people, were promises and threats. His promises were chiefly of an earthly paradise, framed to the gust of the *Arabians*, who lived under the *Torrid Zone*; and therefore the use of women, rivers of waters, cooling drinks, shady gardens, and pleasant fruits, are most delightful to them. To answer these desires, he calculated his paradise, as may be seen in the *Alcoran*: *They shall enter into gardens**, where the trees are covered with branches and leaves, there they will repose on fine beds lined with crimson. They shall have wives, who shall not cast a look but upon them, and whom no person, man nor angel, may touch before them: they shall resemble coral and rubies. What Lord do ye blaspheme but your own Lord? There be in those gardens women that have eyes exceeding black, and bodies exceeding white, covered with pavilions. He also described the punishments of hell, such as might be exceedingly afflicting to the *Arabians* †: *They shall drink nothing but boiling stinking water, breathe nothing but hot winds, dwell for ever in continual burning, fire and smoke, eat nothing but briars and thorns, and the fruit of a tree, Zaron, that riseth out of the bottom of hell, and its branches resemble the heads of devils; and this fruit shall be in their belly like burning pitch.* That he might leave nothing that could beget fear, he sets forth to

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them

* *Alcoran*, Chap. 2, 55, 76.† *Ibid.* Chap. 7, 37, 43.

them what miseries had fallen upon those that would not be instructed by the prophets; that for this reason the old world was destroyed by the deluge, *Sodom* by fire, and *Ad* and *Thamud*, two ancient tribes of the *Arabs*, were extirpated for the same reason. What exceedingly vexed him was, his opposers desired to see a miracle, such as *Jesus* and *Moses* wrought, to prove their mission from God *. In answer to this, he sometimes told them, *That Mohamed was a prophet sent to preach to them the rewards of paradise, and the pains of hell; that their predecessors contemned the miracles of other prophets, therefore he would work none.* And sometimes he said, *That those who were ordained to believe, should do so without miracles.* But when he came to *Medina*, and got an army to back his cause, he told them plainly, *God sent Moses and Jesus with miracles, yet men obeyed them not, and therefore he had sent him without miracles, now to force them, by the power of the sword, to do his will* †. Hence he forbade his disciples to enter into any disputes about religion, but to fight for it. *When you meet with unbelievers, says he, in the chapter of battles, cut off their heads, kill them, make them prisoners, and never cease to persecute them, till they have laid down their arms and submitted to you.* To encourage them powerfully to follow this maxim, he promises all those who die in such holy wars, that they shall go straight to paradise, notwithstanding all the crimes they committed during their whole life. Never was a captain better obeyed; for his zealous followers made use of fire and sword to propagate *Mahometism*; and there was no way for a conquered people to escape their fury, but by embracing their religion.

In the 10th year of his pretended mission, his uncle and protector *Abu Taleb* and his wife *Chadi* dying, his party became weak at *Mecca*. To strengthen them, he took three other wives, *Ayesha* the daughter of *Abubeker*, *Zueda* the daughter of *Zama*, and *Hapsba* the daughter of *Omar*, and thus became son-in-law to the three principal men in the city. In the 12th year of his pretended mission is placed the *Mesra*, that is, the famous night-journey

* Alcoran, Chap. 6. 17.

† Ibid. Chap. 2, 3, 4,

journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*. He pretended, as he lay in bed with his wife *Ayesha*, he heard a knocking at the door. When he rose, he found the angel *Gabriel* with seventy pair of wings, and the beast *Alborak* by him ; but the beast having been long idle, from the time of Christ to *Mahomet*, would not let *Mahomet* mount, till he promised him a place in paradise. Then getting on with ease, he came, the angel *Gabriel* leading the bridle, in the twinkling of an eye, from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, where all the saints waited on him at the gate of the temple. *Mahomet* and *Gabriel* leaving these saints, he ascended in a ladder of light. Upon their arrival at the first heaven, which is of pure silver, having stars hanging in chains of gold, each of the bulk of mount *Nobo*, near *Mecca*, the angels watched to keep the devils off them. Here he met with an old man, our first father *Adam*, who gave thanks to God for so great a son. Here he saw angels, some in shape of birds, and others of beasts, and among them a cock as white as snow ; his head reached to the second heaven, the distance of 500 days journey, his wings extending from east to west ; that every morning, God singing a hymn, the cock joins with him so loud, as all in heaven and earth, except men and fairies, crow also. But at the day of judgment he draws in his wings, and crows no more. Then he goes to the second heaven, all of gold, and saw *Noah* with more angels than in the first. In the third heaven, which was made of precious stones, at the entrance, he met *Abraham*, who recommended himself to his prayers ; and there he saw a vast many more angels than in the former heaven, and among them a great one of so prodigious a size, that the distance between his two eyes was as much as 70000 days journey, according to our rate of travelling here on earth. Thence he ascended to the fourth heaven, which was all of emerald, where he met *Joseph* the son of *Jacob*, who recommended himself to his prayers. Here he saw a vastly larger number of angels, and another great angel as high as from the fourth to the fifth heaven, who was continually weeping for the sins of men. Thence he goes to the fifth heaven, made of adamant, where he found

Moses, and a greater number of angels than in the former. Thence he ascended into the sixth heaven, made of carbuncle, where he found *John the Baptist*. Hence to the seventh heaven, all made of divine light: here he found *Jesus Christ*; where he alters his style, for he saith not, that *Jesus Christ* recommended himself to his prayers, but that he recommended himself to *Jesus Christ*, desiring him to pray for him; whereby he acknowledgeth him certainly to be greater. But it was his custom, through the whole scene of his imposture, thus to flatter the Christians. Here, he saith, *he found a much greater number of angels than in all the other heavens besides, and among them one extraordinary angel, having seventy thousand heads, and in every head seventy thousand tongues, and every tongue uttering seventy thousand distinct voices.* The angel *Gabriel* not being permitted to go any further, *Mohamed* was directed to the throne of God, where he saw a vast extension of light, of that brightness, that his eyes could not bear it. On the right side of the throne, the impostor says, *God's name and his own were written, with these Arabick words, La Ellah, Ellallah, Mohamed resul Ollah*, that is, *there is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet*; which is the Creed of the *Mahometans*. Being approached to the presence of God, as near as within two bow-shots, he tells us, *He saw him sitting on his throne, with a covering of seventy thousand veils before his face; that God laid his hand on him, and there discovered to him his whole law.* Then *Gabriel* conducted him back, and set him again upon the *Alborak*, which he left tied at *Jerusalem*, and then taking the bridle in his hand, conducted him back to *Mecca*, in the same manner, as he brought him thence; and all this within the space of the tenth part of one night. This abominable lying fable is shortly hinted at in the *Alcoran*, and more at large, gathered out of *Mahometan* authors, by the learned *Dr. Prideaux**, *Hornbeck*†, and others. When *Mohamed* reported this ridiculous story, many of his own sect received it with a hoot, laughed and stumbled at it; but

* *Life of Mahomet*, Edit. 6th, Pag. 46 to 60.

† *Summa Controvers.* Pag. 80, 81. & apud authores ibi citatos.

but they who had swallowed the rest, digested this also: which, with others of the same kind, taken from the memories of those who conversed with *Mahomet*, make up the volumes of their oral law or *Sonab*.

Mahomet finding difficulties in staying longer at *Mecca*, he engaged some disciples at *Yathreb*, now called *Medina*, 270 miles from *Mecca*; and on the 12th of the month *Rebbia*, that is with us the 24th of *September*, he flies to *Yathreb*. From this flight the *Mahometans* reckon their *Hegira*, which in *Arabick* signifies *flight*, and coincides in its commencement with the year of our Lord 622. Being settled here, he changed the name of the place, calling it *Medinatol-nabi*, the city of the prophet, or simply *Medina*, as it is called to this day. Having thus obtained his desire, to have a town at his command, and having preached his imposture 13 years, for the remaining 10 years of his life he fights for it; and that he may be no more troubled with any questions about his religion, he forbids all disputes about it *. But 'tis not my business to enter into the detail of his wars; those who desire to be informed, may see *Elmacine's Historia Saracenicæ*, *Ockley's History of the Saracens*, *Prideaux's Life of Mahomet* and others. In the 10th year of the *Hegira*, he was poisoned at *Chaiba*, in a shoulder of mutton, and died in the 63d year of his age, and 23d of his pretended mission.

But to shew further what just grounds we have to reject *Mahometism* as an imposture, I shall consider, 1st, How scandalous and enormous *Mahomet's* life was. 2dly, Offer some grounds for rejecting his *Alcoran*. As to the life of *Mahomet*, in the first part of it, he led a very licentious course in rapine and plunder, attended with bloodshed, according to the use of the *Arabs*, where one tribe took from another all they could. After he commenced a prophet, he swelled with ambition, aiming to gain an empire, and teaching his disciples not to dispute for religion, but propagate it by force of arms and dint of the sword, as appears by what is above advanced. Secondly, He was a most lustful leacher, guilty of polygamy, adultery, and the like crimes. After *Cadigba* died, which was in the 50th year of his life, he took at least fifteen

* *Alcoran*, Chap. 4, translated by Du Ryer, wives;

wives ; others reckon them 21, of which five died before him, six he repudiated, and 10 were alive at his death*. *Zaina*, one of his wives, was the spouse of *Zeyd*, an enfranchised slave ; she being beautiful, he caused *Zeyd* to put her away, that he himself might marry her : at which some of his disciples taking offence, out comes the 33d chapter of the *Alcoran*, where God is brought in, telling he had married *Zeyd's* wife to *Mahomet*, and rebuking him, that knowing God had given him this liberty, he should abstain so long from her, out of regard to the people. Where at once we have him guilty of adultery, blasphemy and imposture ; adultery, in marrying and possessing *Zeyd's* wife ; blasphemy, by fathering such a wickedness upon God ; and imposture, in deluding the people with such a pretended revelation. Besides all these wives, he had a concubine dearly beloved, an *Egyptian* sent by the governour of that country, to gratify his brutish passion, that he might more easily treat with him about some affairs. His lust straight kindled to her, so as *Ayesha* and *Haphsha*, two of his wives, found him in the fact. They making a noise, the cunning impostor, to smoothe the matter, emits the 66th chapter of the *Alcoran*, called a *prohibition* ; where the first words are, *O prophet forbid not, for the contentment of thy wives, that which God has permitted to thee ; God hath granted unto you to lie with your maid-servants*. And in that same chapter he threatens his wives with divorce, unless they were content ; whereupon they submitted, and returned to his house. These laws gave such liberty to his licentious followers, as they made no more words about this matter, but laid hold of the opportunity ; and ever since it has been an established law among all that sect, besides their wives, to keep as many women-slaves, as they shall think fit to buy. Tho' this impostor had so many wives, and was so excessive in lust, yet he left no child behind him but *Fatima*, the wife of *Ali*, who survived him only 60 days. There are strange things said of his lust, as that he had in venery the strength of forty other men, and other stories of that kind to be found in Dr. *Prideaux* †,

* *Prideaux's Life of Mahomet*, Pag. 118.

† *Life of Mahomet*, Pag. 127, & seqq.

and other authors cited by him. Whatever laws he gave to restrain lust in others, he reserved still latitude to himself. He allowed no man to have above four wives; but to himself he reserved a liberty to marry as many as he pleased*. He obliged others who had two, three, or four wives, to use them all alike; but as for himself, he might do as he thought fit. He prohibited others to marry near relations, as mothers, sisters of their father or mother, their aunts or uncles daughters; but in that 33d chapter of the *Alcoran*, which seems calculated to gratify his brutish passion, he brings in God exempting him from that law, and giving him privilege to take to wife the daughters of his uncles or aunts, or whomsoever he pleased. Nothing but the whole sex would content him. Finally, that *Mahomet* is a vile impostor, is further evident, because, tho' he pretended that he himself was a prophet, and had the impudence to say, *Remember how Jesus the son of Mary said to the children of Israel, I am the messenger of God, he has sent me to confirm the Old Testament, and to declare to you there shall come a prophet after me, whose name shall be Mahomet* †; yet there is not one syllable of him either in the Old or New Testament; yea some of his own people called him a magician.

Secondly, The *Alcoran*, the *Mahometan* bible, the prop and standard of their religion, is nothing but a rhapsody of lyes, contradictions and fables. True it is, the impostor, to shew his impudence, extols it to the heavens, saying ‡, 'Tis sent for the instruction of men, copied out of a book that's kept in heaven, to which honour and praise is due eternally; that 'tis || sent of God, inspired of God, and confirms the ancient scriptures. But notwithstanding these commendations, it contains many absurd falsehoods, as *Pharaoh's* wife prayed, *Lord build me a house in Paradise* **, the books of *Moses* and *Abraham* ††. Now the latter wrote no books. That Christ spoke in the cradle as a man of forty or fifty years ‡‡. That *Abraham's* father's name was *Azer*. That *Ishmael* was one of the

* *Alcoran*, Chap. 4, 33.† *Ibid.* Chap. 61.‡ *Ibid.* Chap. 80.|| *Ibid.* Chap. 21. 42.** *Ibid.* Chap. 66.†† *Ibid.* Chap. 53.‡‡ *Ibid.* Chap. 4.

the prophets. That *Zachary* was dumb only three nights*, whereas he was so nine months. That they killed not the *Messiah*, but one who resembled him†. He belyes the patriarchs, saying, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* believed his *Alcoran*, tho' they lived some thousands of years before he was born. He speaks falshood of the Apostles, making them his scholars, tho' they lived about six hundred years before him. This specimen shews that that book does not proceed from the God of truth, but from *Satan*, a lyar from the beginning, and *Mahomet* his scholar. 2dly, It contains many foolish, romantick, idle, fabulous stories; as where he tells that *Solomon* had an army composed of men, devils and birds; and a pismire cried out, *O pismires, hasten to your houses, lest Solomon's army tread you under foot‡*. That *Solomon* called for the whoop that was absent, she came and brought him tydings from the queen of *Sheba*; to try the truth of this, he sent the whoop back with a letter to the queen of *Sheba*; and more of this stuff. That *Abraham* and *Ishmael* razed the foundations of the temple of *Mecca*; that they were sent to keep clear the oratory there; that a mountain was raised over the *Israelites* to overshadow them||; that the moon was divided into two parts**; that *Moses* was called in the valley of *Toi*††; that when *Cain* killed his brother *Abel*, God sent a raven that made a pit in the earth, and shewed him the manner how to bury his brother‡‡; that he made the winds subject to *Solomon*, to blow at his command when it pleased him; he made the devils subject to him, some built his palaces, others dived into the seas to bring him pearls, others were bound to attend his commands|||. Many other fables he tells; as that *Alexander* the Great came to the place of the sun-rising, and found him lying in a clay fountain; that at the day of judgment the mountains shall be carded like wool, and the heaven and the earth being loosed, eight angels shall sustain God's throne. More fables of the same kind may be seen in

* *Alcoran*, Chap. 29.† *Ibid.* Chap. 4.‡ *Ibid.* Chap. 27.|| *Ibid.* Chap. 2.** *Ibid.* Chap. 2.†† *Ibid.* Chap. 47.‡‡ *Ibid.* Chap. 79.||| *Ibid.* Chap. 38.

in *Mahomet's* conference with *Abdias*, translated into latin by *Hermannus Dalmata*, the abstract whereof may be found in our learned countryman, *Dr. Forbes* his *Instructiones historico-theologicæ* *. And yet more of these fables are to be seen in the book *de generatione & nutritura Mohamed*, *Of the generation and education of Mahomet*; where, by a strange heap of fabulous stories, the *Mahometans* run up the genealogy of their false prophet, through a race of prophets, to *Adam*; upon each of which prophets, say they, shined a beam of light †. But above all, an innumerable heap of fables may be found in their *Sonah*, or oral law. *Clenard*, who went to the College of *Fez*, and studied the *Arabick* tongue so carefully, as he read many of their books, and could even speak that language, says, in his epistle to *Mr. Latomus*, *præter Alcoranum, habent libros Sunæ, tam ridiculos, ut ipsi sese possint confutare*; i. e. *Beside the Alcoran they have their books of Sonah, so ridiculous, that they may confute themselves.* 3dly, The *Alcoran*, besides its lyes and fables, is also stuffed with contradictions; as, *that all who live right, whether Jews or Christians, shall be beloved of God*; and in another place, *none can be saved but they who embrace the Alcoran* ‡. Sometimes he says, *That all Devils shall be saved*, and elsewhere, *that only the Devils shall be saved, who obey his Alcoran* ||. What shameful reserves he makes from the laws he gives to others, that he may have liberty for his own lust, we have already seen. No wonder the *Alcoran* is such an hotch-potch, since it proceeded from such a spirit of contradiction and wickedness, and was compiled of some confused papers, left by *Mohamed* in some rusty chests, mutilated and spoiled, eaten with mice and vermine. Indeed the reading of it may be enough to make any person of consideration to reject it from being a standard of truth, and rather loath it as a confused jargon. But we have enough to the present purpose concerning *Mahometism*, the design of this digression being to show that the religions

* Lib. 4. cap. 13. pag. m. 199. & seqq.

† Vide Hottingeri Hist. Orient. lib. 1. cap. 3.

‡ Alcoran, cap. 12.

|| Ibidem.

religions invented by men are absurd, and contrary to reason.

Having thus demonstrated the insufficiency of natural religion to conduct mankind by itself to eternal happiness, it will naturally follow, that there was a necessity for a particular Divine Revelation to make the whole doctrine of religion clear and obvious to all capacities, to add weight and authority to the plainest precepts, to animate our fears with the terror of punishments, to strengthen our hopes with the encouragements of a glorious reward, and to furnish men with extraordinary assistances, to enable them to overcome the corruptions of their nature. The service due to God, the incarnation of the son of God, his satisfaction in our room to redeem us from misery, the resurrection, and the nature of the general judgment, with many other articles of Religion, are above what unenlighten'd reason can discover, and need to be cleared up by divine revelation; that is, by a formal declaration coming from God, that we may know certainly by an infallible testimony what is his divine will. Since God is the infinitely perfect intelligent Being, who has created man, reason allows us not to doubt but he can by infallible means teach us what is necessary for us to know. Revelation is also necessary to give an unmoveable foundation to Religion, since the greater part thereof is so many declarations of what God does, and will do for men. Who but himself can concerning these things declare his mind? His revelation finally and infallibly determines the truth, and assures us of what he will do. Reason at best can but darkly teach us a possibility or resemblance of these things; 'tis Revelation effectually fixes our faith concerning them. It was therefore most reasonable, and agreeable to the notions we have of the perfectly good God, to wish and hope for such a revelation: and this was what some of the best and wisest of the philosophers did. When therefore there are some books proposed to us, which pretend to be sent by God on this glorious errand, to enlighten our minds, to assist our reason, supply all our wants, and in a word, to teach

teach us how we may worship, glorify and enjoy God; it concerns us all to consider seriously what they advance, and whether or no they carry along with them sufficient marks of being a divine revelation. And this we shall now endeavour to do.

I have already exposed the vain pretences of the *Mahometan* religion, and shall in the course of this book shew the vanity and folly of *Paganism*. We have yet the *Jewish* and *Christian* religion to consider; and that both these were revealed by God, shall now be proved.

That the *Jewish* religion contained in the Old Testament is so, may appear, *First*, from the excellency of the doctrine. There we have right notions of God; he is represented as infinitely great and good, and therefore to be loved and feared with the highest degree of affection and veneration. There we have right apprehensions of the nature of man, both as to his original excellency, and as to his vileness and weakness contracted by his sin and apostacy from God. The truths there revealed are suitable to the honour of God, to relieve the most pressing necessities of men, to clear up the doubts of reason, to quiet the commotions of conscience, and to point out such an intercourse with God, from whom we are fallen, as tends to promote our recovery. The doctrine and worship revealed in the scriptures lead to a redeemer, thro' whom alone complete salvation may be obtained. It discovers a satisfaction given to the justice of God for the breach of his law, and that those, who by nature are children of wrath, may have their sins pardoned, and become a peculiar people; and so have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in them, and by the operation of the spirit made willing to walk in God's statutes. Thus the justice, mercy, and wisdom of God are equally glorified, and our Salvation secured and advanced.

Secondly, That our Religion founded upon the Old Testament, (the same may be said of the New) is revealed of God, appears by the manifestation of divine power in working of Miracles. By Miracles we are to understand some wonderful work, that either exceeds all created power, or all the power and art of man, and is con-

66 *That the Scriptures are revealed by GOD,*

trary to the nature of devils, which does not fall out by accident, but must be foretold, so as the person who works the miracle, does it to confirm his doctrine, or shew his commission from God. And these miracles must not be done in a corner, but in the view of the world, and in sight of those to be convinced by them. Miracles wrought after this manner to confirm a doctrine, tending to promote the honour of God, and good of man, must either be wrought by God, or some good angel at his command; being contrary to the nature of evil spirits, which hate God, and seek to ruin man; and therefore can never engage men to believe and obey a doctrine which leads to eternal happiness, or do any wonderful work to encourage them in it. Since then these Miracles must come from God, so must the doctrine they confirm be from him: because God cannot put forth his divine power to confirm a lye; nor can he command or suffer good angels to do wonderful works for such an end; nor would they of themselves do it, being contrary to their nature, and duty to God. Therefore, if *Moses* and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles did truly teach that doctrine, and work such Miracles to confirm it, as are related in the books of the Old and New Testament, then these books must of necessity be the Word of God, and the history related in them must be true. What a multitude of miracles were done by *Moses*? As, the ten plagues on *Egypt* *; the drying up of the red sea, till the *Israelites* passed over †; the drowning of the *Egyptians*; the feeding *Israel* with Manna, that fell like a dew about their camp for 40 years, and never ceased to fall, till they did eat the first-fruits of the promised land ‖. The rock being smitten, waters gushed out in abundance, to supply the wants of the people and their flocks ‡. When the law was given, what a terrible appearance was there at mount *Sinai*, of the mount burning with fire, with blackness, darkness, and tempest? If a beast did but touch the mountain, it was stoned or shot through with a dart **. The pillar of cloud overshadowed the tabernacle

* Exod. vii—xiii.

† Exod. xiv.

‖ Exod. xvi—

‡ Exod. xvii. Numb. xx. 7, 8.

** Exod. xix. Hebr. xii. 18—20.

Chap. i. *proved by the Doctrine and Miracles.* 67

nacle in the day-time, and in the night it appeared as fire *. The earth did open and swallow up *Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*, with their families †. A brazen serpent being lifted up on a pole, healed those who looked on it, of the mortal bites the fiery serpents gave them ‖. During the forty years the *Israelites* were in the wilderness, their clothes and their shoes did not wax old ‡. How many Miracles were done by the prophets *Elijah* and *Elisha*, and above all by our Lord Jesus? *The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up* **. All which Miracles were recorded in the age and place, when and where they were wrought. They were not done in a corner, but in the face of the world, before many witnesses, and those, persons of known credit and integrity. Upon the whole, these Miracles prove *Moses* and the Prophets, and especially our Lord Jesus, at whose command they were done, to have been sent of God; that their doctrine is true, being confirmed by this divine testimony; that the books where these things are related, is the Word of God, and the history true.

Thirdly, That our religion, founded upon the Old and New Testament, is revealed by God, appears by Prophecies, and extraordinary manifestations of supernatural knowledge; by revealing secrets, which can only be done, either immediately by God himself, or mediately by good angels. These secrets are either of things past, present, or to come. Of the first kind are the discovery of those works of creation, done before man was made ††; and *Daniel's* revealing *Nebuchadnezzar's* dream ‖. Examples of the second are, *Abijah's* discovering of *Jeroboam's* wife * *, and *Elisha's* discovering to the king of *Israel*, the secret counsels of the king of *Assyria* †††, and Christ's disclosing the secret thoughts of the Scribes and Pharisees ‖‖‖. Of the third, many examples are contained in scripture, as foretelling

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* Exod. xiii. 21.

† Numb. xvi.

‡ Numb. xxi. 9.

‡ Deut. xxix. 5.

** Matth. xi. 5.

†† Genesis i.

‖ Daniel ii. 19—28.

* * 1 Kings xiv. 5, 6.

††† 2 Kings vi. 9—13.

‖‖‖ Matth. ix. 3, 4.

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the *Babylonish* captivity, and return from it; that the Messiah was to come of the house of *David*; and many of the same kind. The revealing of things to come, is called prophesying in the strictest sense, tho' largely taken, it also comprehends the other two.

Now, let us consider how far the discovery of these things does prove a divine revelation and mission. Here we must remark, *first*, that the revelation of things past, is not a sufficient proof of it; because the truth thereof entirely depends upon the word of the revealer, whose veracity is yet in question. Wherefore the history of the creation given by *Moses*, is not a proof of his divine mission, the truth of the discovery being proved by the unquestionable evidence he gave of his being sent of God, to reveal that and other secrets. Yet if the truth of a past secret, after he has discovered it, can be known otherwise than by the word of the revealer; as when *Nebuchadnezzar* exactly remembred, that the revelation *Daniel* made of his dream was the very thing he dreamed, and thence justly owns, *God is a God of Gods, a Lord of Kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldst reveal this secret**; in that case 'tis a just proof of a divine mission. As to revealing things present that are secret, these only prove a divine mission, when there is a discovery of the secret thoughts and counsels of the heart, which cannot come but by revelation; and therefore fixes a conviction and impression thereof upon those who are present, as in the examples above alledged. *Thirdly*, The foretelling things to come, is not of itself known to be a divine revelation, until it be known, that the thing foretold has accordingly come to pass. The predictions of prophets, which were not to be fulfilled till after their death, did not prove their divine mission to those, to whom at first they prophesied. They were obliged to give other evidences by working miracles, as the prophets who spoke against the altar at *Bethel*†, or by declaring prophecies soon to be accomplished, as *Jeremiah*‡. Nevertheless, the longer space of time that may intervene betwixt the first intima-

tion

* Dan. ii. 47.

† 1 Kings xiii. 1—5.

‡ Jer. xxviii. 16, 17. Chap. xxi. 5, 6.

tion of these Prophecies and their accomplishment, is so much a clearer proof of a divine mission and message to those who have got certain knowledge, that they were really uttered at the time alledged, and of their being accomplished as foretold. Wherefore the Prophecies of the Old and New Testaments, which have been accomplished in later ages, are an evident proof to us, and may be to Christians to the end of the world, of the divine original of these books, which did foretel these things many ages before they came to pass.

Next, We shall give some general characters, whereby true prophecies may be discerned from false or counterfeit. These are of the same nature, by which true miracles are distinguished from false. *1st*, That they reveal secrets, which exceed all natural or acquired knowledge, all the cunning and conjecture of men. *2dly*, That they discover secrets, which either exceed all knowledge of evil spirits, or are contrary to their nature to discover; because the knowledge of them is necessary to promote the honour of God, and good of mankind. *3dly*, It must be known to those who own the commission of the prophet, that at least some of the prophecies have come to pass, or that he has proved by miracles, that he was sent to publish them. The authority of the prophet being once thus established, if the prophecies, not yet fulfilled, be agreeable to the doctrine and other predictions known to have come from God; these, tho' not yet accomplished, the time thereof not being fully come, are to be received by the Church, and believed as divine truths and prophecies, which are to be accomplished in their season.

If we apply these rules to the books of the Old and New Testament, we shall find the writers of them have been divinely inspired with supernatural knowledge, and that these books contain the oracles of God, whereof I shall mention only a few instances. *First*, The prophecies of *Moses* recorded, *Levit. xxvi.* and *Deut. xxviii.* containing predictions of the great happiness the people of *Israel* were to enjoy, if they obeyed God; and of the great judgments he was to inflict, in case of disobedience:

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which being compared with the history from the time of *Moses* to that of the captivity, were exactly accomplished. To which we may add the particular consideration of that part of the prophecy, where God promises to that people, he *would not cast them off nor destroy them utterly, but will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors* *; which was fulfilled, not only in God's preserving that people, during the *Babylonish* captivity, but has also been verified after the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, and through all ages to this day. For we find the *Jews*, tho' scattered through all nations of the world, have always, and even at this time do keep themselves distinct from others, retaining their ancient names, following the particular laws and customs of their own nation, founded on the tradition of their fore-fathers, having the books of *Moses* and the prophets, the letters and words whereof they are wisely careful to preserve, even when they understand very little of the sense of them. Whereas those famous nations of *Affyrians*, *Syrians*, *Egyptians*, *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Chaldeans*, *Philistines*, and the rest who made once so great a figure in the world in the days of the prophets, are now utterly destroyed, neither name nor remembrance of them being left on the earth, since there is neither nation nor family in the world that bear their name, or can give any reasonable proof they are descended of their posterity. Now this is what God alone could foresee or foretel, and what the sovereign governour of the world could only in his wisdom bring to pass: and yet both we in this generation, and all betwixt us and the time of the prophets, have seen and do see accomplished before our eyes. The books therefore that contain these prophecies must be of divine original, and we in this generation have a convincing proof that it is so, by the fulfilling of these ancient prophecies in our view.

A *Second* instance is afforded by the prophecies of *Daniel* †, concerning *Nebuchadnezzar's* image, representing the four monarchies, the vision of the four beasts further
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* Levit. xxvi. 44, 45. Jerem. xlvi. 28. † Dan. ii. 7, 8, 11,

explaining the same; the ram, in the 8th chapter, signifying the *Persian* monarchy, and the he-goat the *Grecian*: which being compared with the history of the times writ by heathens, who knew nothing of these prophecies, as *Diodorus Siculus*, *Justin*, *Plutarch*, *Curtius*, *Arrian*, *Livy*, &c. the fulfilling of them will exactly appear.

A *Third* example we find in the promises, concerning the *Messias*, who is described and prophesied of by *Moses* * and all the prophets. *Isaiab* describes him as God-man †, born of a virgin ‡. *David*, as the eternal son of God ||. In other Texts his death and its circumstances are particularly foretold **, his doctrine ††, his miracles ‡‡, his resurrection |||, his ascension ***. The time of his coming is particularly characterised, *Before the scepter and law-giver depart from Judah* †††; that is, after they were subjected to a foreign power, and before the civil government was intirely dissolved, or the nation broken and dispersed; which must have fallen out betwixt the time of their being conquered by the *Romans*, under *Pompey* the Great, and the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*. Our Redeemer is also prophesied to come, during the standing of the second temple ‡‡‡, and before the end of *Daniel's* seventy weeks ||||, which were to be accomplished before the destruction of the temple and city, which was to be soon after the cutting off of the *Messiah*; for then the land was to be made desolate, *Jerusalem* destroyed, and the people carried captive, without any time set for their restauration. Now all these prophecies, and many others to the same purpose, scattered up and down the books of the Old Testament, published by men living in far distant ages, make up a full description of the person of the *Messiah*, and a kind of history of him; all which we find exactly accomplished in *Jesus* the Son of *Mary*, whose history is contained in the New Testament. The matters of fact there recorded being certainly true, and we shall after-

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* Deut. xviii. 15——20. † Isa. ix. 6. ‡ Isa. vii. 14. || Psal. ii.
 ** Isa. liii. Psal. xxii. †† Isa. lxi. 1, 2, 3. ‡‡ Isa. xxxv. 4—7.
 ||| Psal. xvi. 9, 10. *** Psal. lxviii. 18. ††† Gen. xlix. 10.
 ‡‡‡ Hag. ii. 7—9. Mal. iii. 1. |||| Dan. ix. 26, 27, 28.

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ward prove that it was impossible they could be forged ; it follows, from the accomplishment of prophecies, that the books of the Old and New Testament must be the Word of God ; and that particularly Jesus, our Redeemer, described in the New Testament, is undoubtedly the *Messiah*, who has come into the world, according to the predictions of *Moses* and other prophets, since God alone could foretel, and bring these things to pass.

For the further confirmation of this truth, we may add a *Fourth* instance, the fulfilling of concurring Prophecies of the Old and New Testament, which were to be accomplished after the coming of the *Messiah* in succeeding ages of the world ; as the destruction of *Jerusalem* declared by *Daniel* *, desolate, without a term of recovery, as our Lord also foretold †, in order to the converting of the *Gentiles* in the days of the Gospel ‡. Now all those who have lived after the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Titus*, have had sufficient means to be satisfied fully of the exact accomplishment of these prophecies, from the Jewish, Heathen, and other Historians, and the continued dispersion of the *Jews* to this very day. The fulness of the *Gentiles*; we know, is not yet come in ; and the *Jews* yet continue scattered through all nations of the world. To this we may add the prophecies foretelling, *That Christ should be a light to the Gentiles, and the Isles wait for his law* ||. *That he shall be salvation to the end of the earth ; that kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to Christ's Church* **. Now the Christian people in all ages, as may further appear in the following part of this history, and we, among the rest, have had these prophecies fulfilled before our eyes. We who are in the utmost Isles of the earth have received the law of the God of *Israel* through Jesus Christ, and own ourselves his subjects and servants ; and our sovereign princes, as well as those of other nations, profess it to be their greatest honour, that they are called nursing fathers to the Church of Christ. To this may be also added the prophecies of the New Testament, of the false Christs that

* Dan. ix. 26, 27. † Luke xxi. 20—25. ‡ Rom. xi. 25, 26.
 || Isa. xlii. 1, 4, 6. ** Isa. xlix. 6, 22, 23.

that were to arise to deceive many, as they did almost in every age. The defections of the Christian Church, and the persecutions whereby it shall be tried, in spite of which it shall continue and flourish, are also distinctly foretold; that false prophets shall arise, and particularly that an Antichrist was to be set up at the breaking of the *Roman* Empire, who was to reign many ages, with ten kings, who were to spring out of the ruins of that empire, and to give their power to support that Antichrist; but at length were to exercise it to his destruction, as the Apostles *Paul* and *John* have foretold. All which prophecies have been fulfilled, so far as they were to be accomplished, in the ages already past, to the conviction of every thinking and unprejudiced person, who will compare them with the history of the Church. From all which 'tis evident, that the Word of God is so contrived, as all succeeding ages of the world may have a plain proof, that it could proceed from no other author than the Lord of heaven and earth, *wonderful in counsel*, and *excellent in judgment*; since what is in these books foretold, we in this generation may see fulfilled in its proper seasons.

Fourthly, As the Scriptures are revealed by God, so they are a revelation worthy of him; that is, they are such as were fit for a gracious God to give for the good of his church and people in all ages; they answer all the purposes that are requisite in a divine revelation. This demonstrates not only the truth, but also the excellency of our holy religion: and indeed these two go hand in hand together. That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are so useful, appears, because they are *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works* *. They are a full store-house, containing all things necessary for our conduct and assistance in our way to heaven, as a book inspired and sent of God.

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* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

First, They are *profitable for Doctrine*. All true piety must be founded on knowledge ; it cannot be pretended that this book contains all the truth might be known by reasonable men, there is a reserve for great things to be discovered in a future state. Nor does it disclose all that an infinitely wise God could have revealed, had he thought fit. Nor does it make such a discovery of all the doctrines it contains, as to leave no difficulties concerning them remaining. But it reveals all that's necessary for us to know in order to our happiness. God could not have been author of such a book, and left out any doctrine, the knowledge of which was necessary to our salvation. Here we have a distinct knowledge of God and of ourselves, the divine nature displayed in its essential perfections, and the trinity of persons in one divine essence, an account of the works of Creation, Providence and Redemption, enough to answer our necessity, tho' not to satisfy our curiosity. We are there directed to our first original, certified of our happy estate, while innocent, and fully informed of our misery by our apostacy from God. We have a distinct account of the malady, and of the remedy, by which we may reach remission of sins, and the favour of God ; how we may obtain well-grounded peace of conscience at present, and certain happiness in the life to come. We are there certified of God's eternal purpose concerning the salvation of sinful man, by the death of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and are led to observe much of the wisdom of God in his gradual disclosing these purposes for the faith and hope of his servants, from age to age. There we have an account of our Redeemer's wonderful incarnation, of his holy life, his miracles, the divine evidences of his mission, of his atoning death, of his glorious resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of his father, and thence sending his spirit to his servants and apostles, and coming to judge the world at the last day. We are told how we must worship God *in spirit and truth*, so as to be accepted ; *to honour the son as we honour the father*, by hearty love and obedience, and to follow the conduct of his holy spirit. I cannot insist on all the doctrines there

unfolded, *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel* *. Does any book of the world teach such a system of doctrine, except what is borrowed from this fountain? What was, or what would the world be without it? Nothing but a heap of confusion, ignorance and wickedness. This book then, that removes our ignorance, cures our confusion, and reforms us from wicked practices if we follow its conduct, is a revelation worthy of God.

Secondly, The Scriptures are *profitable for reproof*, and conviction of any errors in the faith, and are able to determine all controversies. 'Tis the trade of the adversary of our salvation, to cast a mist over the truths God has revealed; and he never wants designing men, as his instruments, to serve his purposes. In this case the Scripture is our standard. 'Tis proper it should be so: since 'tis divinely inspired, all ought to have recourse to it, submit to its decisions, and be determined by them. *To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them* †. By this sacred rule our Lord refuted the *Pharisees*, who denied a resurrection ‡: By this the ancients rejected the errors of the *Arians, Pelagians, Manichees*, and others; and by this, to this very day, the errors of *Papists, Socinians, Arminians, Quakers, Antinomians* and others, are refuted: out of this magazine we are furnished with weapons against them; and without this we should be *tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive* ||.

Thirdly, The Scripture is also *profitable for correction*; that is, for reforming the manners of men, and purging away whatever is vicious and impure. In order to this, it has a peculiar property of ransacking the hearts of men, and rectifying these inward motions. *For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart* **. It not only forbids gross enormities, but also requires a careful *abstaining from*

* 2 Tim. i. 10.

|| Eph. iv. 14.

† Isa. viii. 20.

‡ Matth. xxii. 29, 30.

** Heb. iv. 12.

*from all appearance of evil**: not only forbids ribaldry, but even *foolish talking and jesting*†, any discourse that may stir up impure lust: not only forbids theft, but covetous desires. It warns against secret evils, from a regard to him, who *searches the heart and tries the reins*. It binds down a sense of guilt upon the conscience, it unmasks sin and vice, strips it of its vizards, and sets it before us in its native deformity, manifesting it to be opposite to our real good, as well as to the honour of God. It discovers sin to be the mother of sorrow, shame and death; that cheats us with imaginary pleasures, while it produces real and lasting pains, and without sincere sorrowful repentance and reformation, plunges into everlasting misery and torment.

Fourthly, The holy Scriptures are also *profitable for instruction in righteousness*; that is, in every part of duty they are a perfect rule of life. The duties there urged upon us are such as are most becoming God to require, as tend to make us like himself in his goodness, holiness, love, mercy, justice and equity; and at the same time most reasonable for us to perform. A holy sanctified disposition of mind would dispose us for every duty, and carries its own reward along with it. We have mighty encouragements; our diligence and faithfulness draws down the divine favour, but our negligence, his wrath. We may have the assistance of divine grace, the aids of his spirit, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase in grace, and abundant reward in heaven hereafter. We are directed, as to the faith, love, trust and obedience we owe our Maker, Preserver and Redeemer; as to the temperance, requisite in managing ourselves, and as to the justice and charity owing to our neighbours: how to behave in all conditions, stations and relations. If the infinitely wise God gave the Scripture, as his directory, it must be sufficient and complete, else it would be a reflexion on him that gave it.

Fifthly, The Scriptures are able to *make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*. Out of this sacred treasure ministers are furnished for all the parts

* 1 Thes. v. 22.

† Eph. v. 4. Matth. v. 28.

parts of their office ; for exhortation, consolation, for demonstrating and clearing the truth, refuting error, conducting souls in the road to heaven, and administering discipline. Hence they are directed to instruct the ignorant, comfort the afflicted, awaken the secure, silence gain-sayers, reduce the wandring, and form complete Christians. Not, as if the helps of human learning were to be slighted, but the holy Scriptures must have the preference ; and all other helps without them will be insignificant and fruitless. These sacred writings are also able to furnish private Christians unto all good works, and to shew them what they are to believe and do. We have already seen, how insufficient philosophy and heathen learning is to teach divine truths, to reform our manners, or form us into complete virtue. But the holy word of God, the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, thro' the divine blessing, which will not be wanting to them that seek it, are able to do all this : therefore they are a revelation worthy of God.

A *Fifth* Argument to prove that the Scriptures are a most profitable revelation worthy of God, we take from this, that without these sacred records we should have no certain chronology or account of time from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ, which is near 4000 years. The heathens had no account of these times, themselves being judges. *Censorinus*, a learned heathen, who wrote about the year of our Lord 239, (for it was when *Ulpian* and *Pontianus* were consuls, according to himself*, which coincides with that year of the Christian *Æra*,) says, *If the time of the origin of the world had come to men's knowledge, we should begin our calculation from thence* †. The time from the creation of the world to the flood, he from *Varro* ‡ calls *ἄδηλον* : They knew not what it was ; from the flood to the first *Olympiad*, *μυθικόν* or fabulous, because there was nothing but fables talked about it : but the time from the first *Olympiad* to his own day, he calls *ἱστορικόν*, because things then transacted

* De natali die, cap. 21. pag. m. 155.

† Ibidem, cap. 20. ad finem, *Si origo mundi in hominum notitiam pervenisset, inde exordium sumeremus.* ‡ Ibid. cap. 21. pag. m. 154.

acted were written in true histories. Now the first Olympiad, according to the best Chronologers*, coincides with the year from the creation of the world 3174. Here is more than 3000 years, of which there is no historical account, no chronology among the heathens, nor can any be found but in the sacred Scripture. The learned primitive Christians did not fail to twit the Pagans with this. *Justin Martyr* tells them †, *That nothing before the Olympiads is historically writ by the Grecians with any accuracy.* *Theophilus Bishop of Antioch*, another writer of the second century, says ‡, *Herodote, Thucydides and Xenophon, and other Historians, began their writings with the reigns of Cyrus and Darius, not being able to treat of times that were more ancient and prior to these.* To which I may add, that *Censorinus* a heathen says ||, *The time from the beginning of mankind, or creation of the world, to the first flood, whether it had a beginning or always was, or at best, of how many years it consists, cannot be comprehended. The second period from the flood to the first Olympiad, we plainly do not know it; only 'tis believed that it did consist of about 1200 years.* To which I add, that *Tacitus* says **, *The Grecians proud of their antiquities, fix upon times that are most uncertain, wherein no body can disprove them.* Upon the whole I conclude, that profane histories can give no accounts of matters, or periods of time in which they were transacted, before the beginning of the Persian empire, or the deliverance of the children of *Israel* from the *Babylonish* captivity, but what's very fabulous; which shall be made more evident, before we have done with this chapter.

But the sacred Scripture gives a certain and infallible history of all the transactions relating to the church of God,

* *Helvici Theatrum ad annum 3174. Alstedii Chronologia, pag. m. 47.*

† Οὐδὲν Ἑλλήσι προτὶ τῶν Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀκριβὲς ἰσόρηται, operum *Justini*, pag. m. 13. ab initio, Edit. Colon. 1686.

‡ *Ad Autolycum*, pag. m. 136. impress. cum *Justino*, ubi supra.

|| *De natali die*, cap. 21. pag. m. 154.

** *Tacitus hist. lib. 2. cap. 4. Latum antiquitatibus Græcorum genus incertæ vetustati affingit.*

God, from the creation of the world and downward, with an accurate chronology of the time in which these things were acted. To give a short view of this; from the creation of the world to the flood of *Noah*, are 1656 years, as appears by the fifth chapter of *Genesis*, where the age of the Patriarchs, when they begat their eldest sons, with the age of *Noah*, when the flood came, *Gen.* vii. 6. being added together, make up the said sum. 2^{dly}, From the flood, to *Abraham's* going, in obedience to the divine call, from *Ur* of the *Chaldees* to *Canaan*, are 368 years, according to the account given by *Moses*, *Genesis* xi. with Chap. xii. 4. In both these articles, we follow the calculation of the *Hebrew* text, not that of the seventy interpreters. 3^{dly}, From the calling of *Abraham* to the children of *Israel* their going out of *Egypt*, are 430 years, *Gal.* iii. 17. *Exodus* xii. 40, 41. 4^{thly}, From the children of *Israel* their going out of *Egypt*, to the building of *Solomon's* temple, are 480 years; which exact sum we have *1 Kings* vi. 1. And the particulars are to be taken from the lives of *Joshua* and the judges who succeeded him, and of *Saul* and *David's* reign, and the beginning of *Solomon's*, to the building of the temple, all upon sacred record. The 5th article consists of 430 years, from the building of *Solomon's* temple to the entire ruin and burning of it, in the eleventh year of King *Zedekiah*, to be computed by the reigns of the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, recorded in the first and second book of the *Kings*. 6^{thly}, From the *Babylonish* captivity, to the commencement of *Daniel's* seventy weeks, in the seventh year of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, are 133 years. 7^{thly}, *Daniel's* seventy weeks, which ended when our Redeemer was cut off. Now, a day being there taken for a year, and a week prophetically for seven years, seventy weeks make four hundred and ninety years. These years in the above articles being added together, make it appear that the promised Messiah our Redemeer, died in the 3987th year from the creation of the world; from which if we withdraw 34 years for our Lord's life, his birth will be in the year 3953 from the creation. These computations are demonstrated by our learned Countryman Mr. *Baillie*,
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in his chronology * ; and all of them, except some part of the 6th article, are founded upon the holy Scriptures. Providence has so ordered, that after the beginning of the *Persian* Monarchy, we have some footsteps of profane authors to confirm the accomplishment of Scripture-prophecies, and the chronology of time ; but before that, there is almost nothing but fables in heathen authors, or in the fragments of them that remain. 'Tis not my business to go to solve all the difficulties that may arise upon the chronology of the Scriptures. They are removed, and seeming inconsistencies reconciled, by many critics and chronologers † ; tho' the Deists and Anti-scripturists, who of late move these objections, never look into these authors, where they have been long ago answered. The different dates of periods of time, some kings reigning jointly with their fathers, or the son being enthroned king in his father's life-time, as will appear in a careful survey of the reigns of the kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, and other circumstances of that kind, will remove those rubs out of the way. What I have asserted in the argument, is now plain to every unbiassed reader, that the Scripture is the only book in the world, that gives an exact account of time, from the creation of the world to the birth of Christ. God, of his great goodness, would not leave his church in darkness, as to the great things he had done for her, and the time in which they were transacted, but gives a clear discovery of them in his sure word of prophecy ; and therefore even upon this account 'tis a revelation worthy of God.

Sixthly, Not only are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament from God, and worthy of him, but they are of divine inspiration. To set this argument in its proper light, I shall, 1st, state the notion of divine inspiration. 2^{dly}, Prove that the Scriptures are so inspired. What we understand by divine inspiration, may be

* Bailii Opus Hist. & Chronologicum, speciatim, lib. 2. pag. 34, 35.

† Spanhemius, Baillie, Petavius, Nisbet, and others.

be easily conceived, if we consider, 1st, That inspiration was an impression on the mind, or a divine impulse *, that acted those inspired persons: God touched them, and they were guided as under his influence. The glorious sovereign of heaven and earth has near access to the spirits of all his servants, and in a special manner made such impressions on those he selected as penmen of holy writ, as sufficed to convey the notions he intended for them, and to assist them to convey the same, so received, to others. 2^{dly}, The impression was such, as made it certain to the persons inspired that it came from God. *Abraham* was sure, that God called him to offer up his only son for a burnt-offering. 3^{dly}, By such impressions as these, the penmen of those holy oracles were stirred up to write: *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21. In the whole compiling of their sacred writings, the divine spirit not only immediately suggested and dictated to them such things as were matters of pure revelation; but he illuminated their minds in the several doctrines and prophetic truths they delivered in writing; he refreshed their memories as to things they knew in a common way; he helped to bring forth things divinely impressed on their imagination; and so conducted them in all their composures, as they neither omitted any thing he thought necessary or expedient, nor inserted any thing but what would serve his purpose; but selected those things he knew would be most profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction to his people, from one age to another. Yet, 4^{thly}, These divine impressions they were under, did not deprive the persons inspired of the use of their reason and understanding, nor did remove their several natures, faculties, and abilities, and the difference among them; but was suited to the different genius of the writers. *Isaiah* writes as a courtier, *Amos* in a style more proper to a herds-man; yet both were divinely inspired. The penmen of the Scripture made use of their natural abilities,

* Dr. Calamy's Sermons on Inspiration, pag. 31. & seqq.
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ties, and the Holy Spirit supplied their defects ; so that the poetical books of the Old Testament, appear to be the product of study and meditation, yet are divinely inspired. 5thly, These divine impressions they were under, preserved them from error, with which all merely human writings are chargeable.

The nature of divine inspiration being thus stated, I proceed to prove, that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are so inspired. What has been already advanced, does demonstrate this truth. Who but an infinitely Holy God could endite such sublime and pure doctrine? Could foretel in the Old Testament the Miracles that Christ did in the New? Or could prophesy of all the great events that came to pass in the Church of God, with such infallible certainty? These things so recorded in the sacred writings, are witnesses beyond all exception, of a mission from heaven, and of divine inspiration. Who but God could declare so exactly all the periods of time, in which great things were to be done for the Church of God, and even most of them long before they happened? These things were hid from the learned heathen world, but revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is therefore profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.* 'Tis not the writings of philosophers, nor the rabbinical fables of the Jews, nor popish legends, nor unwritten traditions ; but the holy Scriptures make us perfect men of God, since they are so inspired as to answer all these ends and purposes.

But I shall further confirm this truth. And, 1st, Since the Scriptures are true, they are divinely inspired. What has been said above, gives good evidence of the truth of the Scriptures, and more shall be afterward added to demonstrate that there can be no cheat nor forgery in any of the books thereof. Yea, we have further evidence of the truth of them, than of any other ancient writings ; every knowing person owns the accounts of the *Roman History*

History writ by *Polybius*, *Livius*, *Suetonius*, *Florus*, *Tacitus*, and other writers of that kind. They who do so, cannot call in question the truth of our sacred writers, without proclaiming themselves unreasonable. He that will take pains to read *Josephus* against *Appian*, or *Eusebius's* books *de præparatione evangelica*, will see the sacred truths have abundant collateral confirmation, as we shall afterwards take notice. *Celsus* and *Julian*, the most learned enemies to our religion, have concurred in owning the truths of the New Testament. The penmen of the Bible were as credible as any persons whatsoever; they ventured their all upon what they taught to others. Some of them were kings and princes, eminent for their figure in the world: tho' others of them were of a much meaner rank, yet they were eminent for their wisdom, piety, sincerity, and other divine endowments. They stuck not to report their own failures, or the blemishes of those whom they most extol; they were eye-witnesses to the most part of those things they report; they did not aim at wealth, honour, or worldly endowment or emolument, but rather ran the hazard of all that could be dear to them. Either then no writings are to be owned as true, or our sacred writings must be acknowledged for such. The truth of the Scriptures being thus evident, the justness of the inference does plainly appear: If these be true, they must be divinely inspired, for they offer themselves to us as such; if they are not to be depended upon in this, they are the most delusory writings in the world, whicheven our adversaries dare not assert. That our sacred penmen alledge they are inspired, is evident; for we are told, *That holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* *. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* †. *David* penned the second Psalm, but the Apostle declares, *it was God, who by the mouth of his servant spake, Why do the heathen rage* ‡? *The Holy Ghost spake by Esaias the Prophet* ||. The Apostle Paul declares, that he and his fellow-apostles speak, *not in the words of man's wisdom, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth* **.

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* 2 Peter i. 21. † 2 Tim. iii. 16. ‡ Acts iv. 25. || Acts xxviii. 25.

** 1 Corinth. ii. 13.

2dly, The Scriptures most certainly are from God, and therefore are inspired in the sense before explained. The more we consider the matter of the Scriptures, the manner of management, their scope and design to glorify God, and the holy means they direct to for accomplishing this end; we may be the more convinced they are of God. An author they must have, not only as to particular parts, but as to the whole composition. They must either be from God, or from the devil, or from men. 'Tis impossible they can have their rise from the devil, since their great design is to overthrow his kingdom. If they came from men, these must be either good men or bad. From good men they could not come, unless divinely inspired; for they could have no goodness in them, if they came with a lie in their mouth, pretending their writings were given by the inspiration of God, when not so. Nor could our sacred writings come from bad men, since their chief business is to promote true goodness, and holiness, and to spread the honour and glory of God in the world; they must therefore have come from God. Indeed if the Scriptures had not been from God, we may be assured he would never so remarkably have owned them, and made them so useful to spread serious piety over the world; he would never have inclined the most holy religious men, who have his spirit, to lay the greatest stress on them from age to age; he would never have laid open his counsels there; he would never have fulfilled the prophecies; he would never have given the writers of these sacred books his broad seal, by endowing them with a power of working miracles. Now, since they are from God, they must be given by inspiration; for otherwise they could not answer their end; they would not have given that undoubted certainty in sacred matters we need. We might lay stress on them, and yet be deceived.

3dly, The harmony of the Scriptures would be inconceivable, if they were not from God by inspiration. The notions of men are commonly as different as their faces; human writings differ exceedingly; yea, a man, if he write much, may differ from himself. But amongst our
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facred writers there is a most harmonious consent. The Old Testament and the New most exactly agree: tho' several persons in both write on the same subjects, tho' they had different views, and one mentions what another omits; yet, to a wonder, they agree and harmonize. Our Bible is all of a piece, which is inconceivable, if the Spirit of God did not preside over the composure; especially when we consider the different styles of the different penmen, the variety of matter treated upon; tho' they have written historically, prophetically, and doctrinally, and about the sublimest, as well as the most common matters, yet they all agree. Here are doctrines, types, prophecies, histories, promises, threatnings, all depending on one another, written by several persons, at several times, without any possibility of combination; yet they not only agree in their account, but conspire all to promote the glory of God, in the happiness of man, through the promised and provided *Messiah*. This harmony could not be by concert, for the writers lived at several hundred years distance, and could have no correspondence. They knew not one another; nay, many times they did not understand their own writings, but were forced to search into their meaning: and yet they all agree, because they were all inspired and guided by the same Spirit of God.

4^{thly}, The fulfilling of the Scriptures demonstrates their inspiration. *Our Lord came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil. Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.* Do we not find the holy Scriptures transcribed (as over again) in the course of divine providence to the church in every age, and toward particular persons in the various experiences and changes of their lives? How could the word and providence so exactly answer each other, if that were not divinely inspired, as well as this divinely directed? As to the church, how wonderfully is it preserved? How oft has it been brought low, yet kept from perishing? like the bush burning, yet not consumed. How has it been raised out of the dust? How sorely has it been visited, when impure and degenerate?

And how strangely refined by the forest visitations? How certainly does it triumph in the issue over its greatest foes? And all in exact conformity to Scripture. As to particular Christians, how fully do they find the Scripture verified in their case? How does the experience of *David* in the book of Psalms, and of other Saints, recorded in the book of God, agree with the experience of Christians in all ages? This were inconceivable, if God, who knows what are, shall, or can be the cases and experiences of Saints in every age of the world, had not indited that book. Saints may find the power and influence of the spirit of God, renewing their whole man, so as the understanding is not only enlightned, but also the will and affections are changed, with the whole course of the person's actions. They perceive an excellency in the law of God, they before despised. They take more pleasure in doing righteousness than formerly in doing unrighteousness, which now they cannot think of without horror. When they find all this done by the Spirit of God, according to the rule and method revealed in the Bible; this to them does prove it to be the Word of God, and is a witness, as well as miracles*. How pleasantly may Christians find promises accomplished, when they walk with God? And how awfully are the threatenings inflicted, when they depart from him. How visibly may they observe sin punished, and sincere obedience rewarded? Now, how could this be? How could the bible contain such a series of providence, such a model of divine government, general and special, if the infinitely wise God had not a peculiar hand in its composition? By answering the word in all his dispensations, God does, as it were, avouch the Scripture to be his, in the hearing of the world. He shews that he holds the reins in his own hand, and makes all things accomplish the end the Scriptures hold forth. Volumes have been profitably writ on this subject†; but what is said does prove that the Scriptures are inspired and revealed of God.

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* John v. 36. John x. 25. 1 John v. 10.

† See Mr. *Fleming's* fulfilling of the Scriptures, in three Parts. Private Christian's Witness to Christianity.

Tho' what has been already advanced does demonstrate the authority of the sacred Scriptures, yet since the weight of the subject requires, and the nature thereof admits many kinds of proof, and in opposition to the notions of the modern deists, who set their mouth against the heavens, and mock at divine revelation as a cheat; I shall prove that no part of Scripture could be forged, and that the whole deserves intire credit. These sacred books have not only abundance of intrinsick proof in their own bosom, but also a collateral confirmation from the testimony of others.

I begin with the five books of *Moses*, which the church of the *Jews* did own in the days of Christ, and in all their scatterings to this day, to be the Word of God given by *Moses*. If these books be not true, they are the most notorious cheat imaginable. But these books are such, and the history they contain so related, that it is impossible for *Moses*, in the time of his life, to have made them pass for true, among the *Israelites*, as the law of God, had they been forged. And it must also be impossible for any person, since that time, to impose such a cheat upon that nation and church*. That *Moses* could not have put such a cheat upon them, is evident, because the matters of fact related, from the 5th chapter of *Exodus*, ver. 1. to the last chapter of *Deuteronomy*, are things, for the most part, said to be done before the sun, in the sight of *Israel*, or of the *Egyptians* and them together; and they could, by their very senses, know and judge the truth of them: As, the plagues on the *Egyptians*, the dividing the red sea, and leading through the people of *Israel* more than 600000 men, beside women and children; the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, that appeared to them, and led them 40 years through the wilderness; the miraculous *Manna* by which they were fed for the same space; the quails, and water out of the rock; the glorious appearance of God in giving the law on mount *Sinai*, and many such like miracles;

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* Mr. *John Simpson*, Professor of Divinity, his Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures,

together with *Moses's* rehearsing the law, civil and sacred, making the tabernacle with all its parts and instruments, settling the priesthood in the family of *Aaron*, with the laws thereto belonging. Now if all these things were not done, as recorded in the books of *Moses*, it was impossible the *Israelites* in his time could believe or receive them; for every man, woman, and child, capable of discerning, must have clearly seen the cheat, and known all the matter of fact to be false, and therefore would certainly have rejected or destroyed both *Moses* and his books; especially since they were so unwilling to submit to these laws, or receive them at his hand, as the history fully declares, since he appeals to their senses for the truth of all these great acts of the Lord, *Deut.* xi. 1—9. and that he wrote all these things in a book, and delivered them to the priests and elders of *Israel*, *Deut.* xxxi. 1—9. and they received them. Upon the whole, 'tis evident, that what is contained in the Pentateuch, from *Exod.* v. 1. to *Deut.* xxxiv. could not have been imposed upon the *Israelites* by *Moses*; and if the far greater part of these five books could not have been forged, or imposed on the *Israelites* in the time of *Moses*, no more could the preceding part of them, because it agrees exactly with the rest, and is confirmed by the same miracles which prove his divine mission.

As the *Jews* could not have been engaged to receive these books, if forged, in the time of *Moses*, so neither could they, since his time or Christ's, been imposed upon by them, if the matters of fact there related were false; because in whatever age they may be supposed to have been forged, the cheat must have been discovered: which will appear, *First*, Because that remarkable deliverance of the people from *Egypt*, bringing them through the red sea and the wilderness, and putting them in possession of the land of *Canaan*, were matters of fact so remarkable, which must have been so carefully noticed and remembered by posterity, as they could not readily forget them. At what time then this part of the story is supposed to be forged, it must be look'd upon, by all knowing men, as an extravagant fable, since in that case no person

son could have any notice of it, before the forged story appeared.

Secondly, In these books of *Moses* is contained an intire system of the laws of the *Israelites*, civil and sacred, confirmed by so many miracles of mercy and judgment, to be observed under the highest penalty, from the time *Moses* published them: Which laws, the history of *Moses*, and the succeeding prophets among the *Jews*, teach us, they with great difficulty submitted to and observed, yet were obliged thereto by many remarkable providences of judgment and mercy. Now it was as impossible for any person whatsoever to forge and impose on the people of *Israel* such a system of laws, civil and sacred, especially when said to be established by such wonderful works of God, as 'tis now for any man to impose upon us in this nation, or any other people, a system of laws, civil and sacred, and to persuade us that these laws were given our ancestors by Almighty God, and that our forefathers, from one generation to another, and we ourselves, were remarkably plagued for slighting of them.

Thirdly, The great solemnities which were to be observed through all generations, in memory of the miraculous delivery from *Egypt*, and the other mighty acts of God in bringing them to the land of *Canaan*, founded on God's will, and committed to writing at the time of their first institution, shut the door against all forgery in all future ages; especially considering the book containing these rules, was at that time committed to the custody of the priests and elders of *Israel*, *Deut.* xxxi. 9. and their sovereign princes were appointed each of them to have a copy of the book, *Deut.* xvii. 18—20. by them, to be kept safe, for the use of the following generation, whereby it was impossible such solemn observances could creep in among them by degrees, and afterwards be established by subsequent laws, as is the fate of those, who observe such solemnities from oral tradition. These solemn observances were the circumcision, the passover, daily sacrifices, new moons, sabbaths, and solemn feast-days, the great day of attonement, the year of the jubilee, &c. In each of these many outward performances are required,

and the whole rules of those laborious services contained in the books of *Moses*, which God gave to his people, to teach them the same and other precepts, and that they might never be imposed upon by human inventions.

Fourthly, The many standing monuments, which we are told of in the books of *Moses*, that were left among the people of *Israel* as a testimony of the truth of those things writ there, as the office of priesthood in the family of *Aaron*, exclusively of all the families of the tribes of *Israel*, which the people unwillingly submitted to; the tabernacle, with all its parts, furniture and instruments; some of these, as the mercy-seat, and candlesticks of inimitable workmanship, and vast expence, all particularly described and approved in the books of *Moses*; the high-priest's Garments, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, and serpent of brass, made by the same order. Now the tabernacle and all its vessels, as being of constant use, from the time of *Moses*, to the building of *Solomon's* temple, was a standing proof of the truth of the book that prescribes them, where the authentick copy of it was repositied. At whatever time then we can suppose the books of *Moses* to have been forged, we must suppose the tabernacle and those other ornaments to have been made, and at the same time to have been things never before heard of, whereby the cheat would be manifest to every body.

Fifthly, All the following books of the Old Testament do either suppose, or assert the books of *Moses* to contain the oracles of God. For as to their doctrinal part, they are only an explication of these laws, or exhortations to observe them, confirmed with promises of mercy, and denunciations of judgment. The history they contain, is only the continuation of that in the books of *Moses*, declaring how the *Jews* in following ages, for above 1000 years did obey or transgress these laws, and how they were favoured on their obedience, or punished for their transgressions. Which being all wrote about the time when the matters of fact there recorded were done, the several authors do appeal for the truth of what they wrote, to the pulick records of the kingdom then extant, which
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by many instances we find more exactly registred, and kept among these eastern princes, than commonly in our days, among the princes of *Europe*. Now, since these books contain the history of the *Jewish* Church from the death of *Moses*, and beginning of *Joshua's* government, throughout all the following ages, without any interval, till the third year of the reign of *Artaxerxes*, king of *Persia*; these books being true, 'tis not only impossible the books of *Moses* should, during that time, be forged and imposed upon the *Jews*, but they must certainly be genuine, and really owned and received by the people, as the law of God given by *Moses*. If we suppose the books of *Moses* to be forged, the whole books of the Old Testament must be false, and imposed on the *Jews*; which is a thing impossible to be done, even supposing them to be the most barbarous of nations. The more books of the Old Testament Deists can suppose to be counterfeit, more easily should the cheat have been discovered by any of sense among that people, and the more unwillingly should they have received these books, as the oracles of God; because, as the history proceeds, there is still a greater discovery made of their unthankfulness to God, and their rebellion against him, and heavier judgments poured out on them for the same. Besides, a larger thread of the history containing a succession of their judges, kings, and rebellions in Church and State, would have made the cheat more hateful and apparent.

Sixthly, The books of *Moses* could not have been either entirely forged, or made up with alterations, after the return from the *Babylonish* captivity, by *Ezra*, or any body else about his time, as some alledge without reason: And that 1st, Because *Ezra* himself in the third chapter of his book, *Ver.* 2——5. does almost in express terms affirm, that *Joshua* the son of *Josedech* and *Zerubabel* brought with them the writings of *Moses* from *Babylon*, in the first year of *Cyrus*. The same is imported *Ezra* vi. 18——21. where they offered sacrifices, and kept solemn feasts according to the law of *Moses*. They had at the same time the book of *Jeremiah*,

2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 22. *Ezra* i. 1. *Daniel* also had it at *Babylon*, *Dan.* ix. 2. They had the laws concerning the courses of the priests delivered by *David*, king of *Israel*, according to the Spirit of God, 1 *Chron.* vi. compared with *Ezra* iii. 10. From all which it appears, that it was impossible for *Ezra* either to have forged the law anew, or to have made any alterations in it; for whenever he should have attempted any such thing, either the history of his own book, declaring the books of *Moses* were brought back with *Joshua* and *Zerubabel*, would have been found out to be a notorious cheat and falshood, by which all his credit with that people would have been lost; or else those copies of the law, brought back with *Joshua*, would at least have been found with the priests in the temple, as of standing force and daily practice, by which they would examine any new copy he could offer, and could not but perceive the smallest difference. 2dly. The great numbers of those who had seen the former temple, who were still alive, when the foundation of the second temple was laid, *Ezra* iii. 12. who could not be ignorant of the laws that were kept on record, and were in force until the destruction of the first temple, were as so many checks to any that would adventure to forge a new law, or alter the old. 3dly, They brought back 5400 vessels of gold and silver, *Ezra* i. 11. which had been carried out of the temple at *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and restored by *Cyrus*; which vessels must have been known by the ancient priests then alive, who had formerly made use of them in the temple-service, and the orders of the priests of the family of *Aaron*, being observed by *Joshua* and *Zerubabel*. All this makes it more impossible to impose upon them a new law. 4thly, The precepts against marriages with the heathen, were plainly broken by the *Jews*, expressly against the law of *Moses*, and they were drawn into the abominations of the heathen, in which trespass their princes and rulers were chief, *Ezra* ix. 1, 2. with their Priests and Levites. Now it was impossible for *Ezra* to have forged, or even to have altered the law of *Moses*, which the princes, rulers and priests had broken. This was

was a tender point, wherein the interest of their families, and affection of their wives was nearly concerned, so as they must have been engaged to examine with the greatest niceness all the copies of the law, that *Ezra* could offer: yet we find they were so far from opposing *Ezra's* command in this matter, that they acknowledged their transgression, and chearfully joined with *Ezra* in putting away this great abuse; and abandoned the strange wives they had taken, with their children. Yea, all of them high and low, allow their names to be recorded for the instruction and warning of posterity, *Ezra, Chap. x.* All this could proceed from nothing, but the unquestionable proof they had, that the writings extant among them under *Moses's* name, were the law of God delivered to their fathers, for the breach whereof they had been severely punished in *Babylon*; and all this demonstrates it was impossible for *Ezra*, or any other, to have forged or altered the law of *Moses*.

Seventhly, The law of *Moses* could not have been forged or changed, betwixt the days of *Ezra* and our Redeemer's incarnation. This is but a natural consequence of the former; for if the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* were true history, and extant among the people of the *Jews*, from *Ezra's* days to Christ, they must also have had the books of *Moses* and other books of the Old Testament, which rendred it impossible for any to forge all these books, considering the laws, miracles, and history of Church and State contained in them. We are also told in the book of *Maccabees**, and by *Josephus*†, while they give an account of the state of the *Jews*, during that period, that they had always among them the law of *Moses*, which they most religiously observed, even in the face of the most cruel persecution, which they met with under *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and would not have done for observing any law newly brought in among them. This further appears, by considering that they had the traditions of the elders, which they very superstitiously observed

* Mace. i. 29. Ibid. ii. 5—11, Ibid. vii. 6, —30.

† Antiquitat. Lib. 12. cap. 7.

served in the days of our Saviour ‡, by some of which they made void the law of God. From which it appears, that since the law contained in the books of *Moses* and the prophets, had been by their fathers esteemed the unalterable law of God, which they were not to add to nor diminish from; that even when corruption in worship and manners crept in among them, that law was esteemed so sacred, that no person durst adventure to change it; but they devised an oral law, to be handed down by oral tradition, where they had liberty, without danger of being discovered, to add traditions, that might countenance their present corruptions: which sort of law the *Jews* maintain to this very day, and have gathered the precepts of it into a body, called *Mischnajoth*. Even as the Church of *Rome* finding it impossible to forge any new books, under the name of Christ and his Apostles, or alter the genuine books, have betaken themselves to tradition, which they pretend to have been delivered from father to son by word of mouth, from the Apostles time to this very day. From all these things set together, it may be evident to any thinking person, that the books under *Moses's* name are truly what they pretend to be, the law of God delivered by *Moses* to the people of *Israel* in the wilderness, and could not possibly have been forged in any period of time before the appearance of Christ: and the providence of God, the multitude of copies, and the care of *Jews* and *Christians*, have transmitted them safe to us to this very day.

Beside what has been already discoursed, which does fully prove the authority of the books of *Moses*, I may add some further arguments to confirm the same. 1st, From the personal qualifications of this prophet; he writes with great sincerity. There is nothing more common among heathen authors, than to magnify beyond measure the glorious actions of the great men of their own nation, to boast of their merits, and to disguise their faults. With what praises did they honour their first benefactors and heroes? They did not only exalt them above mankind, but they deified them after their death; they erected statues, built temples and al-

‡ Mat. v. 21—27. Mark vii. 7—13.

tars to them, addrest prayers, offered rich presents, and in some places sacrificed even human victims to them. But with what sincerity does the prophet *Moses* write the history of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, with their children? He gives an impartial relation of the glorious actions they did, and of the faults they committed, without any disguise. He dissembles not the envy and murmuring of *Miriam* his sister*, nor the abominable idolatry of *Aaron* his brother†, tho' he was high-priest; yea, he discovers his own unadvised words‖, and the doubts of his own mind, which none, before he opened them, (but God only) could know. Nothing could oblige him to feign or dissemble. The truth he was ordered to set down, was the only motive he proceeded upon; the execution of God's commands, the only glory he sought after; and a happy immortality, the only reward he aspired to. *Moses's* modesty is no less unquestionable than his sincerity: he was a person of admirable beauty, trained up from his infancy, till he was 40 years old, in *Pharaoh's* court, as a son of the royal princess, educated in all the wisdom and learning of the *Egyptians*, under the best masters they could have any where, as the heir apparent of the crown: and, if we may believe *Philo*, he commanded numerous armies of that nation**, and obtained great victories, according to *Josephus*‡; yet is so far from the vanity of making any long narrative of his own preferments, or the dignities to which he was advanced, and of the great acts he did, as he passes them all over in silence; but on the contrary, he does not conceal his keeping the flock of his father-in-law, *Jethro*, in *Midian*‖‖. Is this the style of an historian, who writes upon worldly designs and selfish motives? Where is one profane writer in whom the like modesty appears? Neither did *Moses* seek his own interest. 'Tis an old and good observation of *Philo****, *That Moses was the only prince who ever governed a people, that did not gather gold or silver into his coffers, who did*

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* Numb. xii. 1—15. † Exod. xxxii. ‖ Numb. xx. 1—12.

** De vita Mosis, lib. 1. ‡ Antiq. lib. 2. cap. 5. ‖‖ Exod. iii. 1.

*** De vita Mosis, lib. 1. pag. m. 15.

not exact tribute, nor found palaces nor possessions, gather servants, riches nor revenues, having nothing of pride either in food or clothing, but the simplicity and frugality of a private man; only he was adorned with the royal endowments of fortitude, sobriety, diligence, prudence, wisdom, patience, justice, contempt of all earthly pleasures, exhorting all his people to virtue, appointing punishments for transgressors, and rewards for the obedient. 'Tis evident he was so unconcerned with the preferment of his own family, and so wholly possessed with a desire faithfully to execute the commission he had received from heaven, that he settled the office of high-priest in the family of his brother, and made choice of *Joshua* his servant to conduct the people, after he was gone, and introduce them into the promised land, and left not his own children any honourable office or prerogative, but that only of simple *Levites*. What can be inferred from such a method of procedure, but that *Moses* acted only by the direction of God?

A second argument to confirm the authority of the books of *Moses* may be taken from the laws he enacted. The ten commandments respect all mankind, without any distinction of age, sex, or condition. The four first regard our duty to God. The other six our duty to our neighbour. We are obliged to love God, with all our heart, all our might, and our neighbour as ourselves. Whatsoever we would not that men should do to us, these we are not to do to them. The magistrate is honoured, the people's interest preserved, and our happiness, if we obey these laws, secured. There is more divine wisdom shines in them, than in all the laws enacted by *Dracon*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Numa*, or any other of the heathen law-givers. The worship of the heathen deities is dwindled into nothing. The wisdom of the *Egyptians*, *Affyrians*, *Greeks* and *Romans*, could not preserve their gods from annihilation: their *Isis*, *Bel*, *Jupiter*, *Ceres*, *Minerva*, *Mars*, and the rest, are forgotten; tho' we know their names, they serve for nothing but amusing children, as *Juvenal* said* of the famous *Carthaginian* general.

* *Juvenal*. Satyr. 10. ver. 167. *Ut pueris placeas & declamatio fias.*

neral. But the knowledge and worship of the true God, taught by *Moses*, has subsisted from the beginning of the world to this day, through all revolutions of ages, notwithstanding all the opposition of the powers of the earth, the wiles of the devil, and the fury of idolatry and superstition, which could never ruin nor obscure it. On the contrary, it has arrived to a greater perfection by the light of the Gospel, being not now shut up among the *Jews* in such a narrow corner, as the land of *Judea*, but spread over the world, to turn all men from darkness to light, and from the service of *satan*, to the service of the living God. The laws of *Moses* are more holy and pure than those of any other nations; they forbid those sins permitted by others, as hating our brother in our heart†; avenging or bearing grudge at the children of our own people; the exposing of infants; simple fornication, and many other evils of the like nature. They condemn all sorts of superstition, with which other nations were filled; they reject all kind of magick incantments, auguries and divinations, and distinction of lucky and unlucky days. How can this law be but holy, which proceeds from an infinitely holy and wise God, who only knows what is best for his people? Even the ceremonial law, tho' exceedingly burdensome, was very useful to separate betwixt *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to distinguish between the severity of the law and the freedom of the Gospel, to try the *Jews* obedience, and to point out the *Messiah* to come, of whom it was a type and shadow. The very burdens of the law did evidence the divine institution thereof. How could the *Jews* have submitted to such a painful ordinance as circumcision, to such expensive sacrifices, to consecrate to God the first-fruits of their ground, and the first-born of their cattle, and to redeem those which were forbidden to be sacrificed, had they not believed these laws came from God, who would severely punish the transgression of them, and been eye-witnesses to the great miracles wrought by *Moses* to confirm the same? To be sure
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† Lev. xix. 17, 18.

such an impatient, quarrelsome, stiff-necked, and rebellious people, as the *Jews* were, would never have submitted to these burdensome ceremonies, but on this account.

There are two laws among others, which well deserve our serious consideration. The *first* is, that *Levitic. xxv. 1.* to the end, which ordained the land should rest every seventh year, tho' he permitted every one to eat that which it should produce of itself, without labour, and forbid them at the same time to make any provision for that year. And 'tis remarkable the law commands the same thing as to the year of jubilee, which was the next after the seventh sabbatick year; so at that time the land rested two years successively. The second law we remark, is that which enjoins all the males to appear in that place, where the tabernacle was to be, three times a year, *Exodus xxiii. 14—18. viz.* at the passover, at pentecost, and at the feast of tabernacles. Now, can it be imagined, that *Moses*, who was a prudent learned man, and a great politician, who loved the people whom he governed tenderly, would appoint such laws, if God had not positively commanded him to do it? Is there any country in the world, how fruitful soever it be, tho' not half so much peopled as anciently *Judea* was, that would suffer all the land to rest every seventh year, and sometimes for two years together? Is there any state encompassed on all hands with powerful, valiant, and implacable enemies, that would strip naked three times a year all their frontiers of all the males, from 20 years old to upwards of 50 or 60? Surely there is not any sovereign in the midst of enemies, as the *Israelites* were, so imprudent as to observe such a conduct; and therefore 'tis even morally impossible, that *Moses* should ever think of making such laws, which would infallibly produce, in a very little time, the utter ruin of the commonwealth, according to the natural course of things, unless God had given him an express command to do so; and assured him, as he informs us, that in the years preceding the sabbatick, the land should produce a double or triple crop: and during the time when men were absent from their cities,

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attending the worship of God, their enemies should not attempt to conquer them, as in fact they never did.

To confirm the authority of the books of *Moses*, I add a third argument from their antiquity. The long lives of the patriarchs before the flood of *Noah*, and also from his time to that of the children of *Israel*'s going down to *Egypt*, made it practicable for a few men to transmit the knowledge of God to their posterity for above two thousand years: but when the age of men was shortned, in the days of *Moses**, to almost the same period as at present, it was necessary that God's mind, for the government of his church, should be committed to writing. *Moses* began to write these divinely inspired books, after he was called to the prophetick office, about the year from the creation of the world 2450. The book of *Genesis* contains a narrative of 2369 years, without which we should have been in darkness concerning all those great events there recorded; tho' it be an history of times before *Moses*, yet all is divinely inspired, and therefore infallible. *Moses* might have memoirs of these periods of time from such as did go before him, and was guided in the whole composure by the unerring spirit of God. The *Israelites* were assured of the truth of the whole by the wonderful miracles he wrought, and the other proofs of a divine mission God gave him in their view. As for the rest of *Moses*'s books, they are of things done in that age, of which themselves had been witnesses, as has been already demonstrated. Now there is no profane history extant, that I know of, except some dubious fragments, but what was writ after the deliverance of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, a thousand years almost after *Moses*'s time. *Herodote*, whom *Cicero* calls the father of history, he being even at that time counted the most ancient historian, wrote but about the time of *Xerxes* the *Persian*'s war against *Greece*, 450 years before the birth of *Christ*, 3480 years after the creation of the world. *Thucydides* and *Xenophon* wrote several years after him, and continue his history. There is no *Egyptian*, *Chaldean*, *Persian*, nor *Scythian* history extant: all the

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accounts

* Ps. xc. 10.

accounts we have of their affairs, are from the *Greeks*, who, as *Juvenal* of old observed, were bold to put great falsehoods into history *. The *Roman* historians are yet of a later date; most of them wrote but about the *Augustan* age, near to the time our Redeemer was born, and many of them long after that. The books of *Berosus*, who wrote the *Chaldean*; *Manetho*, the *Egyptian*; and *Metasthenes*, the *Indian* history; are all lost, and basely counterfeited by *Annius* of *Viterbo*: but tho' they were extant, they were but wrote in the reign of *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*, about 300 years before the birth of Christ. As then the holy Scriptures are by several hundred years the most ancient book in the world; so indeed we have no history that can be depended upon for 3000 years, but what we have in these sacred writings, as before proved †; and these Scriptures being received as a divine revelation, do carry great evidence of their authority, the first revelation being the *Criterion* and Rule of all that follow. God would not suffer the ancientest books of religion in the world, to pass under the notion and title of a revelation, without causing some discovery to be made of the imposture, if there were any in it; much less would he preserve it by a particular and signal providence for so many ages, and make it retain its authority against all the opposition of devils and men. God did first establish his own truth, to which mankind might still have recourse, and by which, as a standard, all delusions might be tried.

For further confirming and illustrating this argument, I shall take a little view of those nations, who have greatest pretences to antiquity, and show that they are neither so great, nor so well founded, and in a word, not to be compared with these of the *Jews* in the sacred Scriptures. Particularly we shall consider the antiquities of the *Egyptians*, *Phenicians*, *Chaldeans*, *Grecians*, *Romans*, *Scythians*, and *Chinese*.

As

* ——— Quicquid Græcia mendax

Audet in historia ———

Satyr. 10. ver. 174.

† See Pag. 77, 78.

As to the *Phenicians*, their only famous ancient historian we hear of, is *Sanchoniathon*, but he is lost. *Philo Biblius*, in the reign of the Emperor *Adrian*, about the beginning of the second Century, translated him into *Greek*, and altered many *Phenician* names, to make them more agreeable to the palate of the *Greeks*. His translation is also lost. It seems to have been extant in the time of *Eusebius*, bishop of *Cæsarea*, for he has preserved a few fragments of it^{*}; where we find *Sanchoniathon* received his information concerning these affairs from *Jerombaal*, priest of the god *Jevi*; and he dedicated his work to *Abibalus*, king of the *Berytians*. If this *Jerombaal* be the same with *Gideon*, who in Scripture is called *Jerubbaal*, he is still 182 years short of *Moses*; but if *Abibalus*, to whom he dedicates his history, be father to *Hiram*, contemporary with *Solomon*, as seems more probable[†], then *Sanchoniathon* will be 480 years later than *Moses*. The fragments that are preserved, are full of strange fables, valuable for nothing but some account of the *Phenician* idolatry, which we shall take some notice of in the second chapter of this essay. The learned Dr. *Cumberland*, bishop of *Peterborough*, in his *Phenician* history, printed in the year 1720, has bestowed pains on these fragments, where it appears the generations recorded by *Sanchoniathon*, and the genealogies of *Moses* in the fifth and eleventh chapters of *Genesis*, do agree. Upon the whole, neither is *Sanchoniathon*, if intire, to be compared with the authority or antiquity of the books of *Moses*; neither does he weaken his authority, but is rather some scraps borrowed from *Moses's* writings, and mixed with a heap of fables.

As to the *Egyptian* antiquities, they were a people so unaccountably given to fables, that the wisest action they did, was to conceal their religion, and the best office of their gods to hold their fingers in their mouths, and enjoin silence to all who came to worship them. I shall, in the following chapter, discourse of their idolatry:

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other

* De præpar. Evangelica, lib. i. cap. 9.

† Vide Joseph. contra Appionem, lib. primo.

other heathens laughed at it ; and 'tis a glaring proof of the greatness of the degeneracy and apostacy of man. *Egypt* was certainly an ancient kingdom, and the best evidence of their antiquity is in the sacred Scripture. The Dynasties of the reigns of the gods and demi-gods among them are plainly fabulous. Thus far it may be granted, that *Misraim*, the son of *Cham*, called by profane authors *Menes*, settled among them, and was their first king. Hence *Egypt* in Scripture is called the land of *Ham* * ; his successors were commonly called *Pharaohs*, as the first emperors of the *Romans* were called *Cæsars*. These *Pharaohs* did reign in *Egypt* for about 600 years ; and after this, princes of their own, till their kingdom was dissolved, and became a prey to the *Persians*, *Grecians*, and after them, to the *Romans* ; and last of all to the *Saracens* and *Turks*. But where is their ancient history ? As to *Manetho*, he is lost ; tho' he were extant, no credit can be given him. He was priest of *Heliopolis*, and wrote in the *Greek* language a history of the several *Dynasties* of *Egypt*, from the beginning he ascribes to that kingdom, to the sixteenth year of *Artaxerxes Ochus* † : since which time *Egypt* has had no king of its own, but was subject to foreigners. He dedicated his book to *Ptolemæus Philadelphus* ‡. Dr. *Stillingfleet* proves that the *LXX* interpreters translated the Bible in the beginning of *Philadelphus*'s reign ; that *Manetho* and *Berosus* wrote some years after them ; and that there might be some history of other nations, as well as of the *Jews*, deposited in the famous *Alexandrian* library ||. The world, as he also observes **, was then awakened into greater inquisitiveness after knowledge, and Providence did give the inquisitive world a taste of truth at present, to stay their stomachs, and prepare them for a further discovery of it afterwards. In order to this, the nation of the *Jews*, which was an enclosed garden before, was now thrown open,

* *Psal.* cv. 23.

† *Eusebii Chronicon* ad annum Ochi decimum sextum. *Prideaux's Connection*, Vol. 1. ad annum 350. ante Christum.

‡ *Ibid.* ad annum 247. ante Christum.

|| *Origines sacræ*, lib. 1. cap. 2, 3.

** *Ibid.* pag. 47.

open, and many of its lights set in foreign countries; not only at *Babylon*, where, after their return, were left three famous schools of learning, *Sera*, *Pombeditba*, and *Nebarda*; but in *Egypt* too, where multitudes of them, by *Alexander's* favour, were settled at *Alexandria*: from which fountains, knowledge came to the rest of the world, whereby God did make way for the knowledge of himself, to be further propagated by the Gospel. To return to *Manetho*, how can he, a writer of so late a date, who had no *Egyptian* records before him, be credited concerning his *Dynasties* of 53535 years*; especially since, as appears by *Syncellus*†, he took his history from some pillars in the land of *Seriad*, in which they were inscribed in the sacred dialect, by the first Mercury *Thoth*, and after the flood were translated out of the sacred dialect into the Greek tongue, in hieroglyphick characters, and are laid up in books among the revestries of the *Egyptian* temple, by *Agathodæmon* the second Mercury, the father of *Tat*. Can any thing be liker a fable than this? How could these pillars stand and be legible after the flood, which overthrew all buildings and monuments? How could *Manetho* transcribe *Dynasties* for above 50000 years, from sacred inscriptions of *Thoth*, who lived in the beginning of the first *Dynasty*? Did he prophesy an intire history of so many years to come? How could this history be transcribed from hieroglyphick characters, which are not letters, but representations of things? How could it be written in any tongue, when it was written in hieroglyphicks? Where is this land of *Seriad*? *Josephus Scaliger*, that learned and inquisitive man, says, *He knows* || not how the second Mercury, or *Agathodæmon*, could translate this into Greek so soon after the flood, when the Greek tongue was not then known, far less admitted into *Egypt*. Tho' *Manetho* be lost, his *Dynasties* are preserved, being epitomized by *Julius Africanus*, from him transcribed by *Eusebius*, from him by *Georgius Syncellus*, and others. But how little to be depended upon, we have already seen.

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*Herodote** *Origines sacræ*, pag. 36.† *Apud Syncellum*, pag. 40. inter scriptores Byzantinos.|| *Notæ in Euseb.* pag. 408.

Herodote and *Diodorus Siculus* have some account of *Egyptian* affairs, which they learned from the priests of that country, who might easily impose upon them, who had no knowledge of the *Egyptian* tongue. These authors have advanced several contrarieties and inconsistencies, as our learned countryman, once my good friend, has made appear*. In short, tho' some great men have made too much noise concerning *Egyptian* antiquities, yet what have we from them, but bare names of kings, and many of these fabulous, and some vast pyramids and labyrinths transmitted to posterity? The *Egyptians* had no records, no documents of any true history, but thought it easy to deceive the *Greeks* with any fabulous narration they pleased.

As to the *Chaldean* antiquities, (where I shall add some things concerning the *Egyptian*;) *Berosus*, who, as *Tatian*, an author in the second century, says†, was a *Babylonian*, a priest of *Jupiter Belus*, and lived in the age of *Alexander the Great*, and dedicated three books of *Chaldean* history to *Antiochus* the third after *Alexander*, who must be *Antiochus Thros*. and so wrote much about the same time with *Manetho*. His book is lost, only some fragments of it are preserved by *Josephus*‡, and *Eusebius*§. Divine Providence has transmitted to us the books of sacred Scripture pure and intire; but as to these books of *Santhoniaton* the *Phenician*, *Manetho* the *Egyptian*, and *Berosus* the *Chaldean*, they are all mangled and lost: and tho' they had been extant, were not of so great antiquity, authority, nor use. To return, *Berosus* rivalled the *Egyptians* with antiquities of vast extent; for *Cicero* tells us**, *The Chaldeans pretended to accounts of 47000 years, tho, says he, they are to be condemned either of folly, impudence, or vanity; we judge they lye, and are not afraid of the censure of subsequent ages. Indeed Tully is in the right; for they had no certain records, knew nothing of the origin of the world, and therefore imagined*
what

* *Spicilegia antiq. Ægypt. cap. 15, 16.*

† *Tatianus Assyrius, pag. 171. printed with Justin, Edit. 1686.*

‡ *Contra Appionem, lib. 1. || De Præp. Evang. lib. 10,*

** *De Divinatione, lib. 1. §. 36.*

what they pleased. Hence rose those vain contests between the *Chaldeans*, *Scythians*, *Egyptians*, and *Ethiopians*, concerning the antiquities of their several nations, where none of them insist upon records, but upon several probabilities, arising from the nature of their country, and the climate they lived under. *Justin*, from *Trogus*, says *, *The Egyptians being defeated by these arguments, the Scythians appeared to be the more ancient people.* Had they had any records, *Psammiticus* would not have been obliged to that ridiculous way of deciding the controversy by his two infants, bred up by a shepherd, without converse with men; concluding that the language they spoke first, would manifest the great antiquity of that nation it belonged to. Accordingly the word they first uttered being *Becos*, and signifying bread in the *Phrygian* tongue, these *Phrygians* were counted older than the *Egyptians* †. Either *Herodote*, who tells this story, was deceived, or the *Egyptians* yielded their cause very easily; for 'tis more than probable the infants had spoken none at all, had they not learned the inarticulate voice of goats they had more converse with, than men. The weakness of this argument declares they had no annals nor history to prove their antiquity by, in these times; else they had appealed to these, rather than to such strange means of probation.

Moreover, the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans* had no *Epocha's* of chronology, no distinct periods of time, not so much as a fixed account of their year, using *lunar* years; sometimes taking three or four months, and sometimes one month for a year. *Diodorus Siculus*, who travelled into *Egypt*, and writes at large concerning their affairs, says ‡, *That from Osiris and Isis to Alexander's government, who built a city in Egypt, called by his own name, are numbred by some 10000 years, or, as others write, little less than 23000.* Afterwards he says ||, *The Egyptian priests make a computation from the government of the Sun, to Alexander's passing into Asia, of about 23000 years.* Moreover, in their fables 'tis said, *The most ancient*
of

* Hist. lib. 2. cap. 1.

† Herodot. lib. 2. ab initio.

‡ Bibl. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 23.

|| Ibid. cap. 26.

of the gods did reign 1200, but the later ones not above 300 years. Now since that number of years exceeds all credit, some are not afraid to affirm, that of old the motion of the Sun not being known, the year was described by the circuit of the Moon. Therefore, when the year was of thirty days, some might live a thousand years; since now when the year consists of twelve months, not a few live above an hundred years. The like may be said of those who are reported to have reigned 300 years; for in their time the year was complete in four months, the solar year having as many months in its seasons, spring, summer, and winter. Indeed the year was scarce well fixed and regulated in the heathen world, till the time of *Julius Cæsar*. But of all countries, we are most uncertain of the *Egyptian* year. If four months be a short year, one lunar month is still shorter; yet we are assured by authors of good credit, that in *Egypt* one month was counted a year. *Varro*, as cited by *Lactantius**, gives this account of the great age of some men in ancient times, who are supposed to have lived a thousand years, *That among the Egyptians, a month is esteemed a year; that the circuit of the Sun, thro' the twelve Signs, does not constitute their year, but the Moon performing her course in thirty days. Plutarch* says†, *That the Egyptians had at first but one month, which afterwards they divided into four, according to the seasons of the year. This seems to be the reason why they reckon so great a number of years, because they count these months instead of years.* According to this computation, the *Egyptian Dynasties* may be reduced to some nearer proportion to truth, of which *Dr. Stillingfleet* makes a calculation‡. But among such a confused heap of uncertainties, I humbly conceive 'tis difficult to find truth. We must go to the standard of the Word of God for it.

Now I proceed to take a little view of the *Greek* antiquities. Tho' the *Romans*, and most of the heathen world received their learning from *Greece*, yet the *Greeks* themselves have no ground to boast of any great antiquity.

* *De origine erroris*, lib. 2. cap. 13. pag. m. 174.

† *Life of Numa*, Engl. Edit. 1683. pag. 249.

‡ *Origines sacræ*, lib. 1. cap. 5.

ty. 'Tis agreed both among learned Heathens * and Christians †, that *Cadmus*, son of *Agenor*, king of *Phenicia*, who went to *Beotia*, and built *Thebes*, or at least the castle called *Cadmea*, was the first who brought letters into *Greece*. *Herodote* says particularly ‡, “ That “ there were no letters in *Greece*, in his opinion, till “ *Cadmus* brought them, and that three old inscriptions “ were extant, in his time, in *Phenician* letters.” Now letters were known among the *Jews* long before this time. *Moses* makes use of them as commonly known in his days. *Job* appears by his long life, to have been before *Moses*; yet his book is written in the same characters. He wishes ||, *Oh that my words were now written, that they were printed in a book.* 'Tis highly probable that this noble art was before the flood, or given by God to his Church soon after it. To discover the novelty of the *Greek* Learning, the question is, when *Cadmus* lived, who first brought letters into *Greece*. Now the *Greeks* have not any thing of greater antiquity than the wars of *Troy*; and I own 'tis not easy peremptorily to fix the time, when things were done in that fabulous age: but I conceive the opinion of the learned *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, who flourished in the second century, probable **, *That the Trojan war was about the time, when Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem.* Our countryman *Mr. Cooper* says ††, *Perhaps the wars of Troy were later than Rehoboam's days: For Appian in Libyc. says, Dido (I think 'tis the Phenicians, Zorus and Charcedon) built Carthage 50 years before the wars of Troy. Now Carthage was built 851 years before Christ; so that by this account of Appian's, Troy has been destroyed 800 years before Christ, 30 years almost before the first Olympiad, about 50 years before Rome was built, namely, about the ninth year of Uzziah, or Azariah king of Judah, the ninth from Rehoboam; to which may be accommodated*
Diodorus,

* *Herodot. Lib. 5. cap. 59. Diodorus Siculus, Lib. 3. cap. 67.*

† *Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 10. cap. 5.*

‡ *Loco citato.*

|| *Job xix. 23.*

** *Ad Autolyicum, Lib. 3. pag. m. 131. Edit. 1686, cum Justino Martyre.*

†† *Essay on the Chronology of the World, pag. 79.*

Diodorus, placing the destruction of Troy in the fifth king's reign, as I take it, after Sesostris, viz. in the reign of Proteus. 'Tis all one to our point which of these opinions be embraced. But if Cadmus about this time brought letters into Greece, their learning can be of no great antiquity. How can the Greeks give account of ancient times, when they had not so much as learned letters, when the world was come to its noon-tide?

Yea, long after this, even to the first Olympiad, the relations of the Greeks were accounted fabulous; they had not learned to speak truth when the world was above 3000 years old. Beside what testimonies I have above adduced to prove this*, I shall add that of Eusebius, who, from Julius Africanus, assures us†, *There is nothing accurately written in history by the Greeks before the Olympiads; all things which are said to have happened before that time, are so confused, incoherent and inconsistent.* Tho' Eusebius and Africanus thus speak, they had seen many Greek historians, which are now lost. If we look into the Greek historians among the Pagans, we shall find this further confirmed; and that even tho' the Olympiads be the best Epochæ the Greeks afford us, yet they were not exactly calculated, nor to be depended upon. For Plutarch says, when speaking of the time when Numa flourished, *That 'tis difficult to determine it: nor can ‡ we make any just calculation from the periods of the Olympick games, which tho' lately published by one Elias Hippiæ, yet carry not sufficient force of argument and authority to render them authentick.* The best of the Greek authors own, that it was impossible for them to write exactly of things of an old date. Thucydides, who flourished about the 88th Olympiad, that is, about 3526 years from the creation of the world, and is one of the most grave and impartial historians Greece can boast of, begins his story with that of the Peloponnesian war; because, says || he,

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* Supra pag. 77, 78.

† Præp. Evang. Lib. 10. cap. 10. ab initio.

‡ Life of Numa, near the Beginning.

|| De bello Peloponnesiaco, Lib. 1. non longè ab initio.

the matter that precedes this, cannot now, through length of time, be accurately discovered, except by conjecture; Greece being not then famous either for war or other matters, and the country so called was not well inhabited, but full of unquiet stations; frequent and continual removals, having no settled commerce, nor form of a common-wealth. Plutarch, tho' a later author, having writ in the time of the Emperor Trajan, yet is a historian of good credit; he dares go no further back than the time of *Theseus*: for, says he*, as historians, in their geographical descriptions of countries, crowd into the furthest parts of their maps those places that escape their knowledge, with some such remarks in the margin as these; all beyond is nothing but dry and desert sands, or unpassable bogs, or Scythian cold, or a frozen sea; so in this work of mine, wherein I have compared the lives of the greatest men with one another, having run through that time whereunto probable reason could reach, and through which the truth of the history could pass, I may very well say of those that are farther off, all beyond is nothing but monstrous and tragical fictions; there the poets and there the inventers of fables dwell; nor is there any further to be expected deserving of credit, or that carries any appearance of truth. I know not but some part of the story of *Theseus* resembles the fable; but this learned inquisitive author plainly owns all beyond it to be monstrous and tragical fictions.

'Tis true, there are some old Greek historians lost, whose names I need not repeat; the curious may find them in the learned *Vossius*, *de Historicis Græcis*: but even these lost histories do not much exceed the times of *Cyrus* and *Cambyses*, kings of *Persia*, as the same *Vossius* demonstrates. Of some of these books we have nothing but the bare names; as to others, by the titles of them that are preserved, we may conceive, had they been saved from the general shipwreck, we might have known something more of the origin of the cities in Greece, and the genealogies of their Gods; but no matter of fact, of general concern, before the *Persian* war. Their poets
were

* Life of *Theseus*, at the Beginning.

were the most ancient writers *Greece* can boast of; as *Orpheus*, *Musæus*, *Arion*, *Amphion* of *Thebes*, and after them, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, and others: but even all these flourished after the beginning of the *Olympiads*, and took a boundless liberty to vent fables and debauch the age. *Clemens* of *Alexandria* very justly remarks concerning them *, *That under pretence of musick and poetry, they corrupted the lives of men, and by a kind of artificial magick drew them on to the practice of idolatry.* So that upon the whole, all the antiquities of *Greece* upon record are many hundreds of years after *Moses*. What of them is before the *Peloponnesian* war, is fabulous, and none of them ever to be compared with any part of sacred Scripture.

As to the antiquities of the *Romans*, they acknowledge that *Greece* had every kind of learning before them; that there was nothing like a poem known among them till the year 410 after the building of *Rome*, when *Livius* published a fable †. The story of the *Aborigenes*, of *Æneas* and his descendants, they look upon as fictitious, as the proper subject for poets to divert their fancy with, who might contrive about these ancient times as they pleased; they, as well as other nations, wanting divine revelation, knew nothing of the beginning of time, or origin of the world, as before proved ‡. Hence even *Cicero* speaks of those who had died 100000 years before his time ||. If this learned Orator had understood any thing of the origin of the world, he would have known, that there had not been by far so many years from the creation of man and the beginning of time. But the date the *Romans* insist upon, is from the building of *Rome*, which is commonly reckoned on the first year of the seventh *Olympiad*, that is, after the creation of the world 3198 **, before the birth of Christ 750 years. Tho' this be no ancient record, when compared with those of the *Jews*, yet even as to a considerable part of that time, viz. from the building of *Rome* to the expulsion of the kings, and erecting the consular state, which

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is

* *Protrepticon*, non longè ab initio.

† *Ciceronis Tusc. quæst. Lib. 1. §. 3.* ‡ See Pag. 77, 78.

|| *Tusc. Quæst. Lib. 1. §. 9.* ** *Helvicus's Chronological Tables.*

is reckoned 244 years, they had no certain documents. *Plutarch* owns this, when he says*, *Tho' many noble families of Rome derive their original from Numa Pompilius, yet there is great diversity of historians concerning that time in which he reigned.* A certain writer called *Clodius*, in a book of his of past times, avers, *That the ancient registers of Rome were lost, when that city was sacked by the Gauls; and that those which are now extant, are counterfeited, to flatter and serve the humour of some great men, who are pleased to have their pedigree derived from some ancient and noble lineage, tho' in reality that family hath no relation to them.* In short, the Romans had no documents for their history and chronology before the Censors Tables and the *Fasti Consulares*, which could not be, till these offices were erected, after the expulsion of the kings.

As to the antiquities of the *Scythians*, or other barbarous nations, they had no learning, no monuments, no written history before the spreading of Christianity. We know nothing about them, except what the *Greeks* or *Romans* are pleased to tell us, who still extolled themselves, and contemned others; and therefore 'tis difficult to believe them concerning their neighbours. But since these nations had no learning nor history, till the time that religion and learning were propagated among them in the days of the Gospel, we are no further concerned with them in this enquiry.

What has been said does demonstrate, how small light we can have from the heathen world for any ancient history, till after the beginning of the *Persian* empire, that is, till the sacred history of the Old Testament end, and that revelation to the *Jewish* Church was shut up by *Malachi*, the last of the prophets. A great part also of the heathen learning has been stolen or borrowed from the *Jews*, as we have before discovered †, and as has been more fully proved by others ‡, to whose labours I shall not add.

In

* Life of *Numa*, at the Beginning.

† Above pag. 73, 74.

‡ Eusebius de *Præpar. Evangel.* lib. decimo per totum. *Bochart*, *Gale's Court of the Gentiles*. *Grotius de veritate*, &c.

In the *last* place, since the remote parts of the world have been made known to us by navigation and commerce, some travellers do report strange things concerning the antiquities of *China*. But the *Chinese* themselves confess their antiquities are in great part fabulous*; that their most ancient books were in hieroglyphicks; that their numbers in computation were mistaken, or months put for years. Of what antiquity soever their first writers were, there is little credit to be given to the books now remaining, since that general destruction of all the ancient books by the Emperor *Xi-Hoam-ti*, who lived about 200 years before Christ. He commanded all the monuments of antiquity among them to be destroyed, relating either to history or philosophy, especially the books of *Confucius*, and killed many of their learned men. Tho' the *Chinese* magnified their skill in astronomy to the *Europeans*†, and described their emperors observatory, as most complete; yet upon a view thereof, it appeared very inconsiderable; the Instruments were found useless, and new ones placed in their room by the direction of Father *Verbiest*. They could not so much as make a calendar, their tables of eclipses were so uncorrect, as they could not foretel when that of the sun should happen, and their rules for calculating of them were all false. From the whole, it appears that the sacred antiquity of the holy Scriptures is only real, and true, and infallible; the pretences to it among other nations are fabulous and uncertain.

The divine authority of the books of *Moses*, and of the whole sacred Scripture, is abundantly confirmed by what is already advanced; but since 'tis usual to recommend the authority of ancient writers, by the testimony of others, who have lived as near as can be found, to their time; the books of *Moses* are not destitute of this collateral proof, as I before named it||. The most ancient writers

* Martini Hist. Sinica, lib. 1, 2. Præfatio P. Couplet. in Confucium.

† Le Compté Memoirs, pag. 64, 71, 464. *Jenkyns's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1. pag. 32. & seqq.

|| See above pag. 87.

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writers quote them with great veneration ; from them they borrow their laws, and transcribe many matters of fact. This is not only done by Christians and *Jews*, on whose testimony I do not now insist, but even by Heathens. 'Tis not strange that several *Greek* and *Latin* authors have said very little of a people, with whom they had no converse, who loved not them nor their religion ; yet some of these have wrote concerning the *Jews*, as will appear by the sequel. This subject has been largely handled by others, I shall only glean a few passages that seem convincing, and conclude this point concerning the authority of the books of *Moses*. *Josephus* † and *Eusebius* || have left us the testimonies of many heathen authors to this purpose. The books they cite are most of them now lost, only these fragments they have quoted are preserved. Thus *Numerius*, a *Pythagorean*, tells ‡ of *Jannes* and *Jambres*, magicians in *Egypt*, who were chosen to oppose *Musæus* or *Moses*, his prayers being very powerful with God, and to deliver *Egypt* from those calamities he had inflicted. *Josephus* informs us of several heathen authors, who had writ concerning the flood of *Noah* **, as *Mnaseas*, *Nicolaus Damascenus*, *Manetho*, *Berosus*, *Hecataeus*, *Hellanicus*, and *Acusilaus*. *Eusebius* produces a fragment of *Abydenus*, who says ††, *After these kings governed others, and then Sifithrus, to whom Saturn signified there was a great deal of rain to be on the 15th of the month Desius, and commanded him to hide all letters at Heliopolis in Siparis. He, in obedience to these commands, sailed to Armenia, and found it true that was foretold : on the third day after the tempest was ceased, he sent out birds to try if they could find any earth dry ; when they found nothing but sea, they returned to Sifithrus, who sent out others. At last he had his design, the birds returned loaded with slime. The Gods took Sifithrus from the world, and the ship arrived at Armenia, where the people*
took

† In Antiquitatibus & contra Appionem.

|| De Præp. Evang. lib. 9. per totum.

‡ Apud Euseb. de præpar. lib. 9. cap. 7, 8.

** Antiq. lib. 1. cap. 8.

†† De Præp. Evang. lib. 9. cap. 12.

took chips of the wood, and carried it like amulets about their necks. Any body may here discover the story of *Noah*, tho' under another name. The same *Abydenus* writes of the tower of *Babylon* and the confusion of languages *. *Berosus* the *Chaldean* writes of *Abraham*. *Hecataeus* wrote a whole book concerning him, and *Nicholaus Damascenus* calls him king at *Damascus* †; that the whole country was famous for his sake; that a village is shewn where he lodged; that when a famine was in the land of *Canaan*, he went to *Egypt*, and taught the *Egyptians* arithmetick and astrology. *Eupolemus*, commended by *Alexander Polybistor*, speaks also of him ‖, and says, *Abraham* excelled all men in his time, for wisdom and piety; that when the *Armenians* had overcome the *Phenicians*, and made his nephew their prisoner, he with a retinue of his servants subdued the conquerors—and being entertained at *Argarize*, *Melchisedeck* Priest of the most high God, who reigned there, sent him gifts. *Melo* cited by *Alexander Polybistor*, says ‡, That *Abraham* had one son by his lawful wife, whom he called Γέλως *Laughter*; —that he was commanded of God to offer his son *Isaac* a burnt-offering; that he carried the boy with him to the top of a mountain, where he kindled a fire, and laid *Isaac* upon it; but when he was going to kill him, an angel restrained him; a ram being presented for a sacrifice, he offered the same instead of his son. *Demetrius*, cited by the same *Polybistor* **, tells the whole story of *Jacob's* going to *Charran* in *Mesopotamia*, marrying *Rachel* and *Leah*, having twelve sons, and one daughter *Dinah*; of *Joseph's* being sold into *Egypt*, and most of what happened to him there. From *Artapanus* ††, we have a further account of *Joseph*; from *Aristeas* of *Job* ‖; from *Eupolemus* and *Artapanus* of *Moses* ‡‡, of the plagues in *Egypt*, of his bringing the people through the red-sea, when the *Egyptians* were drowned. But we are to credit the Word of God rather than *Eupolemus*, when he differs from it. The poet *Ezekielus*

* De Præp. Evang. lib. 9. cap. 14.

† Ibid. cap. 16.

‖ Ibid. cap. 17 ———

‡ Ibid. lib. 9. cap. 19.

** Ibid. cap. 21.

†† Ibid. cap. 23.

‖ Ibid. cap. 25.

‡‡ Ibid. cap. 26, 27.

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kielus * has a poetical narration of the same things, with some of the miracles done by *Moses* in the wilderness. I should transcribe almost the whole ninth book of *Eusebius's* Gospel-preparation, if I were to insert all the testimonies to this purpose. *Josephus* in his books against *Appion*, has other testimonies from profane authors confirming the *Mosaick* history, where he also vindicates the *Jews* from the reproaches cast upon them by the heathens. That the *Athenians* borrowed several laws from the *Jews*, and the *Romans* from the *Greeks*, has been proved by the learned *Grotius* †.

Many of the authors cited by *Josephus*, *Eusebius*, and some others of the primitive fathers, to confirm the *Mosaick* history against the heathens, being now lost, in the general shipwreck of ancient books in the barbarous ages, to the great loss of the learned world; those fragments that are preserved should be the more valued by us. But I shall now offer a few testimonies from heathen authors, that to this day remain more entire. *Diodorus Siculus* says ||, *Among the Jews, Moses pretends that the God Jao was the author of his laws.* By *Jao* here we may understand *Jehovah*, who is indeed the author of the laws *Moses* gave to the *Jews*. The same author, in his fortieth or last book, (of which there are only some *Eclogæ* or fragments remaining, for of forty books he wrote, only fifteen remain entire;) being there to discourse of the war with the *Jews*, begins with their origin. According to ‡ him, *They were driven out of Egypt for some infectious disease*, (which is a common calumny of the Heathens) and, says he, *the greatest part of them came into that country, now called Judea, at that time a desert.* The leader of that colony was *Moses*, a wise and courageous man. He having taken possession of the country, built several towns, and *Jerusalem* the most famous of them all; and a temple, which is by them held in great veneration. He taught them the honour and ceremonies due to God; gave laws to their republic,

I 2

* De Præp. Evang. lib. 9. cap. 28, 29.

† De jure belli cap. 1. §. 12. De veritate religionis lib. 1. §. 15. in notis pag. m. 15. || Bibl. Historic. lib. 1. cap. 94.

‡ Bibl. Historic. lib. ult. pag. m. 1190.

lick, and reduced them into order; he divided the multitude into twelve tribes, because he conceived this number most perfect, and conformable to the months of the year. But he appointed no image nor statue of the Gods, because God has no human shape, but judged the heavens that surround the earth to be the only God, and to have all under their power. He appointed the rites for their sacrifices, and rules for their manners; so as they might be different from other nations. He made choice of the best men to govern that people, formed into a body. The priests were constantly to attend the temple, and perform the worship and sacrifices. To determine their important affairs, he gave them judges, and committed to them the care of the laws; and therefore they say the Jews never had a king. But the care and authority of governing this multitude was committed always to one who excelled among the priests in knowledge and virtue; him they call the high-priest, and esteem him as the interpreter of the will and messages of God. He in their publick meetings gives commands; and the Jews are so obedient, that prostrate to the ground they adore him, when expounding the oracles of God. In the end of their laws it is said, Moses the messenger of God says these things to the Jews.— This, and some more to this purpose, has *Diodorus*, where every body who knows the sacred history may understand how far he errs, and how false his narrative is. But he was not at pains to consult the Scriptures, which long before his time were translated by the seventy interpreters, but took his account from common tradition, which is always ready to deceive, or from authors not to be credited.

The like mistakes we may find in *Justin*, the abridger of *Trogus Pompeius*. I shall not trouble the reader with the whole, the book is in many hands; but the sum of his narrative concerning the Jews, may be rendred thus in *English**: The origin of the Jews, says he, is from *Damascus*, a noble city in Syria, which town was so called from *Damascus* a king there, in honour of whom the Syrians employed the sepulchre of his wife *Ariathes* for a temple, and counted her a goddess. After *Damascus*, *Azelus*, *Adores*, *Abraham* and *Israhel* were kings; the happy progeny

* *Justin*. lib. 36. cap. 2.

geny of ten sons made Israhel more famous than his ancestors; therefore the people were divided into ten kingdoms, and all called Jews, from Juda, who died after the division. He commanded his memory to be adored. His portion did accrue to the rest. Joseph was the youngest of the brethren, they being jealous of his excellent genius, secretly sold him to merchants, who were strangers, by whom he was carried into Egypt; where, having learned magical Arts, by his great capacity he soon became dear to the king; for he understood prodigies, and was the first who did interpret dreams; neither was there any thing divine or human but what he understood. He foresaw the barrenness of the land many years before it happened. All Egypt would have perished by famine, if the king, by his advice, had not ordered the corn to be laid up for many years; and his advice was esteemed, not as the word of a man, but as the oracle of God. Moses was his son, who inherited his knowledge, and was very beautiful; but the Egyptians perceiving them scabbed, by the advice of the oracle, that the infection might not spread, drove him with these sick people out of Egypt. He being leader to these fugitives, stole away the sacred things of Egypt, which when the Egyptians sought to recover by arms, they were obliged by reason of tempests to return home. Therefore Moses having got into his native country of Damascus, possesses himself of Mount Sinai, where he with his people being weary with seven days fasting through the desarts of Arabia, he called the seventh day, according to the custom of his country, the Sabbath, and consecrated it for ever for a Fast; because that day put an end to their hunger and wandring, and because they remembered that for fear of the contagion they were driven from Egypt. Lest they should be hated by the natives of the land, for the same cause, they took care of commerce with strangers, which soon turned to a part of their Religion and Discipline. After Moses, his son Aruas, a priest in the Egyptian Religion, was created their King. Hence it became customary among the Jews to have the same person King and Priest, by whose Justice and Religion they increased to a great degree. Thus speaks Justin. In which narrative, as also in the following chapter, which I have not

I 3

translated,

translated, any body may see abundance of errors, almost as many as words or sentences. Whatever truth is in it, must be from the Bible, which he or his author might see, and from which probably he had his relation, tho' he has blended it with fables. *Trogus Pompeius*, who wrote the history which *Justin* epitomized, was a retainer * in the family of the great *Pompey*, who conquered *Judea*. In the expedition of his master, without doubt he picked up the imperfect relations of the *Jews*, or mixed the true history with the fabulous reports of some neighbouring Gentiles. The Scripture-History must then regulate the report. If any body were to look to the *History of the Reformation*, would they not believe *Dr. Burnet*, who has searched the records, and wrote with care, rather than *Varillas*, a *French* papist, who has picked up his narrative from popish authors, to throw dirt on the Reformation?

Cornelius Tacitus has also the story concerning the origin of the *Jews*, where are as many falsehoods, and as injurious to that people, as in those of *Diodorus Siculus* and *Justin*; only some grains of truth may be drawn from their rubbish. *Tacitus* being to write the wars of *Vespasian* and *Titus* in *Judea*, says †, *That in the reign of Isis, an over-grown multitude of Jews in Egypt, under the conduct of Hierosolymus and Judæus, did discharge themselves into neighbouring countries.—That Moses, one of these banished people, did tell them, that they could expect no help either from gods or men, being forsaken of both, and therefore ought to trust him as a leader sent from heaven.—They consented to him, and began their journey, not knowing whither they went; but nothing troubled them so much as want of water.—Moses, that he might secure this people for ever to his interest, gave them new rites, contrary to those of all mortals. All things are profane to them, which we account sacred; and are permitted to them, which to us are forbidden.—They kill the ram, in reproach of Jupiter Hammon, and sacrifice the bullock, which the Egyptians worship under the name of Apis. They abstain from*

* *Nichols's Conference with a Theist*, part 2. pag. 121.

† *Histor. lib. v. non longè ab initio.*

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from swines flesh, because they were once troubled with the scab, to which that beast is obnoxious.——On the seventh day they think fit to be idle, because that day put an end to their labour; and, to flatter their laziness, they rest on the seventh year.——They circumcise their genitals, that they may be known by this to be different from other people.——The Egyptians worship many beasts and compounded shapes, but the Jews know none but one spiritual Being, as their God, and count them profane who worship Images made of vile matter, in the likeness of men. That this great eternal God is unchangeable and immortal, and therefore they have no images in their cities, nor in their temples.——That flattery or honour is not given to Kings or Emperors.——Their country abounds with palm-trees, very tall and beautiful.——Their chief mountain is Lebanon; and, which is strange in such a hot country, it is dark, and covered with snow. From hence proceeds the river Jordan, which does not run into the sea, but passes through a lake or two, and sinks into the third, which is a great lake or sea, but of a pestiferous smell; whose waves are not tossed with wind, nor do fish swim in it, nor fowls frequent its waters, &c.

Plutarch discourses * of the Jews abstaining from swines flesh, and gives odd reasons for it.——He speaks of their Feast of Tabernacles, where they perform Bacchanals, or Rites in honour of Bacchus. For, says he, they use little trumpets to invoke their God, as the Argives in their Bacchanal Solemnities; then come others playing on harps and lutes, whom they call Levites; a name derived from Lyæus, a surname of Bacchus.——Their Feast of Sabbaths, says he, is not disagreeable to Bacchus.——They solemnize the Sabbaths with mutual feasting and drinking of wine, till they be intoxicated. Where he contradicts not only the truth, but also Tacitus†, who wrote before him, that the Rites of the Jews no way agree to Bacchus. Plutarch also says‡, That the Jews High-priest, when he goes abroad, uses a mitre on his head; that he is cloathed with a vesture of Hag-skin, wrought richly with gold; arrayed also in a long robe down to his feet, with many little bells

I 4

hanging

* Sympotiac. Lib. 4. Quæst. 5.

† Tacitus loco modò citato.

‡ Plutarch. ubi supra.

hanging down about the border and skirt of the robe, which jingle and ring as he goes.—That in their oblations they offer no honey.—These things are, without doubt, stolen from the books of Moses, tho' the heathens have adulterated what they speak about them with many fables and falsehoods. Even Juvenal says, That some (meaning the Jews) fear the Sabbaths; they worship nothing but the Clouds and the God of Heaven; they no more eat swine's flesh than man's, from which their circumcised fathers abstained; that contemning the Roman laws, they learn the Jewish, and observe with religious fear whatever Moses delivered in his hidden book. I might cite Strabo†, and many other heathen authors, concerning Moses and the Jews: those who are curious, may see abundance of quotations to this purpose, in the books named at the foot of the page‡. What I have already advanced is sufficient to prove what I asserted, in my entry on this argument, That the books of Moses were held in great veneration, even by ancient heathen writers. From them they borrow many laws, and transcribe many passages and matters of fact; and therefore Moses is not destitute of proof, from testimonies of his adversaries, who neither loved him nor his Religion; which confirms his authority.*

The holy Scriptures being already proved to be a Revelation worthy of God, and given by him; and the authority of the books of Moses so fully established, that there

* Juvenal. Satyr. 14. Ver. 96. & seq.

——Metuentem Sabbata patrem,
Nil prater nubes, & coeli numen adorant:
Nec distare putant humanâ carne suillam,
Quâ pater abstinuit: mox & præputia ponunt:
Romanas autem soliti contemnere leges,
Judaicum ediscunt, & servant, ac metuunt jus,
Tradidit arcano quodcunque volumine Moses.

† Strabo, lib. 16. pag. 760, & seq.

‡ Eusebius de Præp. Evang. speciatim, lib. 9, 10. Clemens Alex. Protrepticon, Stromata. Augustin. de civitate Dei. Cyrillus contra Julianum. Josephus contra Appionem. Huetii Demon. Evangelica, speciatim, Prop. 4. cap. 2. pag. m. 51 ad 68. Grotius de veritate, &c. lib. 1. in notis ad §. 15—18. à pag. 23 ad 66. Jameson's Spicilegia, cap. 8, 9. à pag. 153 ad 212.

there can be no cheat nor falshood in them; the divine authority of all the other books of the Old Testament may be thus further demonstrated. *First*, The doctrine is the very same with what is contained in the books of *Moses*, both as to the Rule and Sanction of the moral Law, and also as to the Ordinances of Worship; all tending to engage that people, and others after them, to the careful and constant observance of the law, for promoting the honour of God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and good of Mankind. The truth whereof is obvious to any, who, with understanding, reads the other books of the Old Testament, and compares them with the books of *Moses*; the doctrinal part of them being only an explication of the laws of *Moses*, and of the prophecies uttered by him, with exhortations and promises to obedience, and denunciations of wrath, to fright from the breach of the divine law. *Secondly*, the history of the miracles and matters of fact appears to be true, because these books have been received as the word of God, containing true matter of fact, doctrine and history, and have been owned as the Word of God by the *Jews*; which could not have been, had they been a forgery and falshood. The same reasons, which prove that the books of *Moses* could not have been received by them, had they been forged, have more force in this case, in regard they had the books of *Moses*, whereby to try all new Revelations pretending to have been from God. They had also an uninterrupted succession of High-priests, who could give an infallible decision by *Urim* and *Thummim* in all such matters; and a succession of prophets extraordinarily raised up, at least one or more in every age, from *Moses* to *Malachi*; of which number were all the writers of the other books of the Old Testament. Many of them wrought signal miracles in the view of the whole nation, princes and people; as *Samuel*, *Elijah*, *Elisba*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, &c. Also there are recorded many remarkable Acts of God's wonderful mercies to that people, when obedient; and terrible judgments upon them, when disobedient. All which do declare how impossible it was

for any person to have forged all, or any of these books, and imposed them on that people, who were so unwilling to obey the commandments of God revealed to them. For by these books, the *Jews* unthankfulness to God, and their rebellion against him, with the judgments he inflicted upon them, their kings and priests, for the same, are revealed to the view of all men. The evidence then of divine authority persuaded the *Jews* to receive them, as being sent of God to reprove them for their sin, and to encourage them to their duty; and the same may persuade all men to the end of the world, that these books came from God, to advance these noble purposes. *Thirdly*, The arguments which I have before advanced, to prove that the Scriptures are a Revelation given by God, for the good of his church*, do all hold concerning those books after *Moses*, from the beginning of *Joshua* to the end of *Malachi*. There true Doctrine shines. There are the manifestations of Divine Power, by working miracles. There are the most certain and infallible history and chronology of the Church of God, and the world, for many ages. There the harmony of inspired writers, tho' in different ages and places, do declare, that the Scriptures are all given by the same Spirit of God. There are prophecies, proceeding from infinite knowledge and wisdom, exactly accomplished. Where can we find such predictions, as in *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and the rest of the prophets, where the event does exactly answer what is foretold? Here the experience of *David* in the Psalms, of *Job* in his book, do exactly correspond with those of the people of God in all ages, because God, who indited this word, knew infallibly what would be the case of his people to the end of the world. Here the brightest discoveries of the vanity of the world in the book of *Ecclesiastes*, and the wisest precepts to conduct human life in the book of *Proverbs*, beyond what any of the heathen moralists could pretend to. They could never enforce their precepts with such an encouraging prospect of rewards, nor with such a terrible view of punish-

* See pag. 65 to 86.

punishments, as these sacred books plainly discover. All these things do loudly proclaim the divine authority of these books; that there is no cheat in them, but that they are sent of God to be a rule to his Church in all ages.

Fourthly, The civil history of the world confirms the certainty of the matters of fact related in these books of the Old Testament. Had the heathens any accurate history of these times, we should be at no loss to adduce testimonies to prove this; but it has already been made evident, that the most ancient historians of the *Gentiles* that now remain, did not begin to write, till some time after the commencement of the *Persian* empire, that is, till the canon of the Old Testament was closed by *Malachi*, the last of the prophets. The heathens also hated the *Jews*, and had little or no commerce with them. We can therefore expect but very imperfect hints of their affairs from them; yet I shall adduce a few, such as offer. *Eusebius* cites the book of *Eupolemus*, concerning the prophecy of *Elias* *, saying, *Moses did the office of a prophet forty years; to him succeeded Jesus the Son of Naue, who executed that office thirty years, and lived till he was a hundred and ten; by him the tabernacle was fixed in Shiloh. After him was Samuel the prophet; and after him Saul was made king by the command of God: he died in the twenty first year of his reign. To him succeeded David his son, who overcame the Syrians at Euphrates, and the city Comagene, with the Syrians and Phenicians in Gileadene. He also fought against the Idumeans, Ammonites, Moabites, Itureans, Nabatheans, and Nabdeans; also against Suron king of Tyre, and obliged all of them, in time to come, to pay tribute to the Jews: But he made a covenant with Vaphres king of Egypt. When he earnestly desired to build a temple to God, and asked where the altar should be erected; suddenly an angel told him, it must be above Jerusalem. But he was prohibited to build this temple, because he was a bloody man, who had spent several years in wars. The angel's name was Dianathan, by whom David was ordered to leave the care of building the temple*

* De præp. Evang. Lib. 2. cap. 30.

to his son. He prepared gold, silver, brass, stones, cypress, and cedar-wood. David also caused ships to be built at Achan, a city in Arabia, and sent men skilled in metals to Urphe, an island in the red-sea, abounding with gold-mines, who brought thence much gold into Judea. David having reigned forty years, left the kingdom to his son Solomon, of twelve years of age, before Heli the high-priest and twelve princes of the people, with the gold, silver, stones, cypress, and cedar-wood. Solomon assumed the government after his father's death, and sent a letter to Vaphres, king of Egypt, for work-men to build the temple. The form of the letter, with Vaphres's favourable answer, Solomon's letter to Suron king of Tyre, Sidon, and Phenicia, Suron's (called in Scripture Hiram's) answer, with an account of the structure of the temple, and the rest of Solomon's buildings and actings, not unlike to what is in the bible, we have from Eupolemus, preserved by Eusebius*. The same Eupolemus, and from him Polybistor, tells us †, That in the reign of Joakim lived Jeremiah the prophet, who finding the Jews offering sacrifice to a golden idol of Baal, told them of a dreadful calamity that would come upon them. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, as foretold by Jeremiah the prophet, came against Judea, destroyed the whole country, took the city Jerusalem, made the King Joakim prisoner, seized all the gold, silver and brass which was in the temple, and sent it to Babylon, except the ark and tables in it, which remained under the custody of Jeremiah. In the same book of Eusebius ‡ we have a large account from Berofus and Abydenus of Nebuchadnezzar, and his successors, kings of Babylon.

Josephus from Dios and Menander, who translated the Tyrian annals from the Phenician into the Greek tongue, gives an account of the friendly correspondence by letters || betwixt Hiram king of Tyre, the son of Abibalus, and Solomon, and how the letter answered the doubts, problems and questions of the former, explaining them to his satisfaction, according to his knowledge, which was extraordinary. Josephus also from the same Menander,

* De præp. Evang. Lib. 9. cap. 31, 32, 33, 34.

† Ibid. cap. 39.

‡ Cap. 40, 41.

|| Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 2.

der, has a short history and chronology of several of the kings of *Tyre* *, where sacred and profane history kiss one another †. Particularly it appears that the *Phenician Dido*, who built *Carthage* in *Afric*, with whom, *Virgil* says, *Æneas* conversed after he fled from *Troy*, lived after the time of *Solomon*; which strengthens the opinion we formerly advanced, concerning the time of the wars of *Troy*. The same *Josephus* frequently brings gentile writers into the field, consenting to the history and antiquities of the *Jews*. I shall but mention one other passage of this kind: while he writes of the famine in the time of *Ahab* king of *Israel*, he says ‡, this want of rain is mentioned also by *Menander*, upon the affairs of *Ithobaal* king of the *Tyrians*, *That in his reign there was a great want of rain, even from the month Hyperbetæus to the same month in the following year, for which he appointed prayers, and there followed great thunder.* This is the great drought recorded 1 *Kings* Chap. xvii. *Ithobaal* might supplicate his Gods, but the judgment was removed by the God of *Jacob*. *Elijah* prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth fruit; James v. 18.

The testimonies I have hitherto adduced to confirm the history of the Old Testament, are from authors that are lost, only some fragments of them are preserved by the care of *Josephus* and *Eusebius*, to whom posterity are much obliged. I shall now offer some testimonies from authors that are transmitted to us more entire. *Strabo* that ancient geographer, who flourished in the *Augustan* age, says ||, *The successors of Moses, who to this time observe his laws, are just men and truly religious, reverencing God, and loving justice.* *Procopius*, writing of the war of the *Vandals* in *Afric*, speaks of an inscription found in that country upon an ancient monument, signifying **, *we are those who have fled from the face of that robber, Jesus the son of Naue.* The land of *Canaan* was not then a barren desert, as *Tacitus* alledges, nor was it obtained with-

* Contra Appionem, lib. 1.

† Vide Jameson's Spicilegia, cap. 11. pag. 217. & seqq.

‡ Antiq. lib. 8. cap. 7. || Geograph. lib. 16.

** De bello Vandalico, lib. 2. cap. 10. *Ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν οἱ φευγόντες ἀπὸ προσώπου Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγόμενου Νάου.*

without war by the *Jews* ; nay, it was conquered by irresistible force, under the conduct of *Joshua* the son of *Nun*, many of the former inhabitants being killed or expelled. Even *Julian*, the emperor commonly called the apostate, writing against the Christians, says *, *You shun to offer sacrifices at the altar, because fire does not descend from heaven to consume the victims, as in Moses's time; but that happened only once in his days, and long after in those of Elias the Tisbite.* Here *Julian* is not so great an infidel, as our modern *Deists* ; he acknowledges the truth of these miracles, which they deny.

Herodote, the most ancient historian among the Gentiles that's extant, has several passages that touch the sacred history ; but they are so disguised and mixed with fables he received from the *Egyptian* priests, that one would scarce know them. To notice a few of them, we may observe, that 'tis the opinion of *Josephus* †, that *Sesostris*, the *Egyptian* of whom *Herodote* tells strange stories ‡, is the same with *Shishak*, who in the fifth year of *Rehoboam* came up against *Jerusalem*, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, of the king's house, and all the shields of gold which *Solomon* had made ||. The same is lately maintained by our learned country-man (while he lived, my good friend) *Mr. Jameson*, against *Perizonius* **, and I see nothing to contradict it. *Sesostris* overcame the *Syrians* in *Palestine*, by which designation the *Jews* are frequently meant among gentile writers. *Herodote* also from an account, disguised by the *Egyptian* priests, has the story of *Hezekiah's* being delivered from the *Assyrian*, *Senacherib* ††. He indeed makes a fabulous application of it, to the city *Pelusium*, and to *Sethon* the *Egyptian* king, instead of *Hezekiah*, by whose piety, says he, it was obtained, that while the king of *Assyria* laid siege to *Pelusium*, a great number of rats were miraculously sent into his army, who in one night did eat all their shield-straps, quivers and bow-strings ; so as on their rising next morning, finding themselves without arms for

* Apud *Cyrillum* contra *Julianum*, lib. 10. † *Antiq.* lib. 8. cap. 4.

‡ *Lib.* 2. cap. 102 — 106. || 1 *Kings* xiv. 25, 26.

** *Spicilegia antiq.* cap. 13, 14. †† *Isa.* xxxvii. 36—38. 2 *Kings* xix.

for carrying on the war, they were forced to raise the siege, and be gone †. 'Tis particularly to be remarked, that *Herodote* calls the king of *Assyria*, to whom this happened, by the same name of *Sancherib* or *Senacherib*, as the sacred Scriptures do, and the time in both do well agree; which shews it is the same fact that is related by both, even tho' the former has disguised the relation, which may be easily accounted for, as *Dr. Prideaux* observes ‡, when we consider that it comes to us thro' the hands of such as had the greatest aversion both to the nation and religion of the *Jews*, and therefore would tell nothing in such a manner, as might give any reputation to either. The same *Herodote* informs us ||, *That Necos king of Egypt fought with the Syrians at Magdollo, and gained the victory, and after the battle seized the great city Cadytis.* This is the same story we have in sacred Scripture **, tho' the names be a little changed. *Mr. Jameson* †† maintains against *Perizonius*, that the city *Cadytis* is *Jerusalem*. I see no reason to doubt of it. 'Tis certain, that *Pharaoh-Necho* having wounded the good king *Josiah* in battle at *Megiddo*, of which wounds he died, soon after the victory put *Jeboabaz* in bonds at *Riblah*, that he might not reign at *Jerusalem*, and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold, and made *Eliakim* king in the room of his father *Josiah*, changing his name to *Jeboiakim*. Now all this might be done at *Jerusalem*, after it was seized by *Pharaoh-Necho*, and the name *Cadytis* being near a-kin to *Kadesh*, holy, is very applicable to that holy city. *Herodotus* also speaks of *Apries* king of *Egypt* ‡‡, who is the same man, whom the prophet *Jeremiah* calls *Pharaoh-Hophrab* |||. The account *Herodote* *** and *Xenophon* ††† both give, of taking *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, does exactly agree with that of the holy Scripture, as we may see illustrated by the learned *Dr. Prideaux* †††.

But

† *Herodote* lib. 2. cap. 141. pag. m. 144.

‡ Connection of Hist. Part 1. pag. m. 25.

|| Lib. 2. cap. 159. ** 2 Kings xxiii. 29—35.

†† *Spicilegia* cap. 2. pag. 25. ‡‡ Lib. 2. cap. 161.

||| *Jerem.* xlv. 30. *** In *Clio*, i. e. lib. 1. cap. 191.

††† *Cyropædia* lib. 7. ††† Connection, Book 2.

But 'tis not my design to insist upon all particulars of this kind. Divine Providence has so ordered, that after the beginning of the *Persian* monarchy, we have some footsteps in heathen authors, to confirm the accomplishment of Scripture-prophecies and threatnings concerning the Church, and other nations. Of which several writers, and particularly Dr. *Prideaux* has made good improvement, in his book entitled, *The Old and New Testament connected, in the history of the Jews and neighbouring nations*; as any body, who reads it with reflection, may perceive. What I have already advanced, does prove, that the civil history of the world confirms the certainty of matters of fact related in the books of the Old Testament.

I proceed now to the books of the New Testament. Having already demonstrated, that the whole sacred Scripture is a revelation worthy of God, and inspired by his Holy Spirit, I shall only add a few reasons to confirm the authority of the New Testament. *First*, that the doctrine is of the same nature with the doctrine of *Moses* and the prophets, and naturally tends to promote the same end. Jesus Christ our blessed Redeemer did press the observance of the moral law delivered by *Moses*, and did vindicate the same from the false glosses of corrupt teachers, in his excellent sermon on the mount*, and in all his sermons. He particularly declares, *that he came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them*†. All the Apostles exactly follow their master's precept and example, as is evident by their writings. 'Tis true, the ordinances of divine worship are changed, as to their outward rites and ceremonies: yet the substantial part of worship is the same in the Old and New Testament; and the worship in the New, does in a more clear and simple manner prosecute the ends of the Old Testament rites. Both these rites of worship were convenient and necessary in their several seasons; even that in the Old Testament, to make way for the worship of the New, by giving the world a right notion of the nature of sacrifices,

* Matth. v, vi, vii.

† Matth. v. 17.

crifices, as a substitution of one that was innocent to suffer in the room of the guilty. But the Old-Testament worship being appointed by God himself, by a revelation confirmed by so many miracles and prophecies, two things were necessary to the change thereof. 1st, That the change should have been foretold in the Old Testament. 2^{dly}, That the person who made the change, should prove the truth of his mission from God by miracles and prophecies, at least equal to those whereby the former was established.

As to the *first* of these, that the rites of the Old-Testament worship were to be changed, was plainly foretold in the Old Testament itself; for *Moses* declared *, *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, to him shall ye hearken.*——And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. Now that whereby *Moses* is distinguished from all the prophets, is his giving a new revelation of the law of God, and appointing new ordinances of religious worship, and acting the part of a mediator between God and his people. Wherefore the prophet, here foretold, must publish the law a-new, and give new institutions of religious worship, and be a mediator between God and his people. If Christ had not done these things, any other of the prophets had been as like unto *Moses* as he; yea, he would have been more like to the other prophets than to *Moses*. But he did a-new publish and explain the law, and gave new ordinances of religious worship, and in a singular manner did act the part of a Mediator; therefore he is a prophet like unto *Moses*. From all which we see, that the ordinances of *Moses* gave the people ground to expect a change of the religious worship; which is yet more clearly discovered by the prophets, who lived nearer the time of the *Messiah*: as, when our Lord substitutes himself in the room of these legal offerings,
Sacrifice

* Deut. xviii. 15, 19.

Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire.—Then said I Lo, I come *. *He is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck* †. There being a change of the priesthood, not of the tribe of *Levi*, but of the tribe of *Judah*, of necessity there must be a change of the law, since so many of the ceremonial laws relate to the priesthood. *Daniel* expressly says ‡, *The Messiah shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*. Our Lord's satisfaction was quite of another nature from all the legal offerings, *He made his soul an offering for sin* ||. He having exercised his publick ministry for three years and a half, offered up himself to death in the midst of that septenary of years, and thereby fulfilled the design of all the *Mosaical* sacrifices; from which time they were of no more use to the people of God. All this is confirmed by the prophet *Jeremiah*, *They shall say no more, the ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more* **. *Christ* being come, as the substance of that, of which the ark and all the rites were a shadow, he being now our propitiatory and mercy-seat, there shall be no missing of the ark, nor any repair to it, as a divine oracle. *The days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt* ††. The prophet *Malachi* says, *from the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts* ‡‡. When he casts off ceremonial services, and carnal ordinances, he will set up spiritual and heavenly in the room of them, and all nations from East to West shall submit to them. All these prophecies are a sufficient proof, that God declared in the Old Testament he designed a new way of religious worship should be instituted by the *Messiah* under the Gospel.

Secondly,

* Psal. xl. 6, 7. † Psal. cx. 4. ‡ Daniel. ix. 27. || Isaiah liii. 10.
 ** Jeremiah iii. 16. †† Jerem. xxxi. 31, 32. ‡‡ Malachi i. 11.

Secondly, Since our Lord Jesus did prove his commission by testimonies of divine power and knowledge, equal to those given by *Moses*; his doctrine must be received as the Word of God. Now, the miracles recorded in the New Testament, as done by Christ, are for weight and number, equal to those of *Moses* and all the succeeding prophets, and were wrought as publickly before the world; all that would, even his greatest enemies, having access to see them. The greatest adversaries to Christianity, who lived near these times, even *Celsus* and *Julian*, were never so impudent as to deny the truth of any of them.

Thirdly, Our Redeemer did one miracle far exceeding any done by *Moses* or any prophet, namely, by raising himself from the dead. This was foretold in the Old Testament, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell**, *neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption*†. And more plainly by Christ himself, when he says, *I lay down my life: I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again*‡. *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it again.*——— But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said unto them, and believed the Scriptures, and the words which Jesus had said||. He yields himself to the death, and suffers his enemies to kill him in the most publick, cruel and ignominious manner; and when he had been in the grave till the third day, he rises again according to the Scripture, and to his own promise.

Our Lord's Resurrection is an illustrious proof of the whole of the Christian Religion; that he is sent of God to seek and to save that which was lost** ; that the father did really give him that testimony, *this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*††; that he has sanctified and sent him into the world‡‡; that he is the son of God; that him bath God the father sealed|||, &c. To be sure, the glorious God would never have given him such credentials, as a resurrection from the dead,

K 2

had

* Or, *in the Grave*, as the Word *Sheol* also signifies.

† Compare Psalm xvi. 10. with Acts ii. 31. and xiii. 35.

‡ John x. 18.

|| John ii. 19, 21, 22.

** Luke xix. 10.

†† Matth. xvii. 5.

‡‡ John x. 36.

||| John vi. 27.

had he been a deceiver. The certainty of his resurrection is as well attested as any truth in the world. *He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once**. Tho' an imposture might be concealed among a few, yet 'tis next to impossible it should be undiscovered by so great a number; that all their hearts and tongues should so keep time, and never clash with one another. The Apostles, who preached this doctrine, testified of things consistent with their personal knowledge; *This Jesus God has raised, whereof we are witnesses†*. They did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead; they conversed with him for forty days; they received orders and instructions from him‡. He upbraided them for their unbelief||. When they delivered their testimony, they called on his name, begged his assistance, and wrought great miracles and wonderful cures. All this they did in the most publick manner, when *Jerusalem* was crowded with strangers at the solemn feasts; they made no secret, yea, they boasted of it**. The *Sanbedrim* of the *Jews* could not deny nor refute the proof, but were stirred with wrath to persecute the Apostles, who talked of it in the place where it was done, and immediately after the resurrection. The men who did so, were of such probity and virtue, as their adversaries never durst call the same in question. They were not educated in courts, nor accustomed to politicks and arts of deceiving. They could have no secular interest in view, in preaching this doctrine to the world, that our Lord was crucified to satisfy the justice of God for our sins, that we are *to die to sin, and live unto righteousness; to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and follow him*. The men they preached to, were either *Jews* or *Gentiles*, educated under many prejudices to the Christian Religion; the *Gentiles* fond of their idols, which the Gospel overturned; and the *Jews* possessed with an imagination, that the *Messiah* was to be a temporal prince, to deliver them from their present oppression. Not finding this in our Redeemer, they would have confuted the truth of his resurrection,

* 1 Cor. xv. 6.

|| Luke xxiv. 25.

† Acts x. 40, 41.

‡ Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.

** Acts v. 30—33.

resurrection, had it not been so bright as they durst never oppose it. How severe are the laws of our holy religion against all deceit, lying, forgery and false testimony *. Had the Apostles been men of degenerate principles, they would never have given such rules as we have in the Gospel. But they heartily believed what they taught, as appears by their chearful suffering on that score. Neither were they foolish stupid men, but understood very well what they taught. Their discourses are grave and well composed, full of life and persuasive eloquence ; so that our Lord's resurrection has all the evidence a subject of this kind is capable of. Add to all this, that it was typified and prophesied of in the Old Testament †. 'Tis confirmed by the testimony of angels ‡, and many wonderful works ||. *There was a great earthquake ; for the angel of the Lord came, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre ; the keepers did shake, and became as dead men : Yea, the soldiers, those adversaries the watch, came into the city and shewed to the chief priests the things that were done.* Since then the truth of our Lord's divine mission to save sinners, and of the whole Christian Religion, is so well attested by so glorious a resurrection from the dead, his laws do oblige mankind, his promises and threatnings most certainly shall be fulfilled. Infidels and unbelievers are the greatest fools and madmen, who lose happiness here and hereafter, and incur endless misery for worse than nothing ; and Christians who do believe his promises, and obey his commands, are the only wise men in the world**.

Fourthly, The truth of the books of the New Testament, and of the matters there contained, is established on the same reasons, by which we have demonstrated the books of *Moses* to be true and genuine, incapable of being forged ; for these books being writ at, or very near the time wherein these remarkable trans-

K 3

actions

* Ephes. iv. 25. Rev. xxi. 8. and xxii. 15.

† Psalm xvi. 10. Hosea vi. 2. Matth. xii. 40. ‡ Matth. xxviii. 5, 6.

|| Matth. xxviii. 2, 4, 11. Mark xvi. 4. Luke xxiv. 2. John xx. 1.

** See this argument more fully handled by *Humphrey Ditton* on the Resurrection.

actions happened, it was impossible they should have been received as true by the people of that place and age wherein they were done and wrote, had not their truth been past contradiction; because every body must have perceived the cheat, especially the rulers of the *Jews*, and body of the nation, who were the most deadly enemies to Christ and his Apostles, who persecuted him and them to the death; and yet they never attempted to dispute one matter of fact contained in them. There is no need of making any distinction among the books of the New Testament, as we did in the Old, nor of proving the truth of those who wrote in distinct periods of time; they being all writ in the space of fifty years, in the very time and age wherein the wonderful works there related were done, and they all teach and explain the same doctrine of Christ. Moreover, the preaching of the doctrine, receiving the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, observing the christian sabbath on the first day of the week, church-officers being set apart for performing these religious duties, and commemorating the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Redeemer, together with the sudden spreading of the Gospel through the greatest part of the *Roman* empire, in *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Afric*, (by which means vast numbers of these books were spread abroad) made it impossible for any to forge or impose them on the world in succeeding ages. For in whatever intermediate age we can suppose them to have been forged, the cheat must have been discovered; because neither the books, nor the story of these wonderful works, should ever have been heard of in any part of the world before, since in this case they had not been formerly invented. Neither can it be supposed that these ordinances were contrived, either for no reason at all, or upon some other account than the death and resurrection of Christ; for the most solemn observances do expressly mention his death, as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. And all the officers in the christian church affirm they are his officers, and act in his name and authority; and pretend to know nothing, and teach nothing among their people, but Christ *and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. and what relates thereto.

thereto. And we are to have a continual succession of church-guides to the end of the world, teaching the same doctrine according to Christ's promise, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.* and *xvi. 18.* 'Tis evident to every thinking person, that no man, nor company of men, how cunning soever, could at this day forge books, containing matters of fact, either more or less memorable than those contained in the New Testament, yet different from what is there recorded, and persuade Christians to receive and believe them, as the reasons of their religious observances. So neither could any do it in preceding ages, for the reasons already alledged.

Add to all this, that the great numbers of people who received this doctrine through the Christian Church, the multitude of copies of those sacred books that were dispersed, the wonderful constancy of Christians in adhering to the truth, and their care to preserve the books containing the rules thereof, amidst the most cruel persecutions that the wit, malice, or cruelty of men could invent or inflict, make it utterly impossible for any to forge these books, and impose them on the christian world; there being so many standing monuments whereby the cheat might be discovered: The whole train of ecclesiastic historians, from the days of Christ to the present time, giving an account of the propagation, continuance and succession of that Religion our Lord did institute. Tho' many have attempted to forge books in the name of Christ and his Apostles, they have always been discovered to be impostors. The very institutions that *Mahomet* prescribed, and committed to writing in his time, with the many copies that were in his days, or soon after spread, of his *Alcoran*, make it impossible for any to forge a new book in his name, and impose it upon his followers, as institutions given by him; yea, prove the *Alcoran* now received by the *Mahometans*, to be the same book that was delivered by *Mahomet*. But I have already discoursed of this imposture: my design now is to confirm the Truth of the Christian Religion. In order to this end,

In the *fifth* place, to silence the clamour and blasphemies of deists and antiscrypturists, let it be considered, that there is not one character nor property of an imposture in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; nay, every thing in it bears the marks of the true religion God has sent to save man from misery. *First*, every imposture must have for its end some carnal interest. *Mahomet's* aim in his imposture was his ambition and his lust; to have sovereignty over his country, to satisfy his ambition, and have as many women as he pleased, to satiate his lust. To gain himself a party for compassing this, was the grand design of that new religion he invented, and the whole end of his imposing it upon those he deluded thereinto. Whoever pursues the like method, must certainly have some such end; it being incredible that any one should take upon him the trouble, fatigue, and danger of cheating for cheating's sake. But we challenge all the adversaries of that holy religion we profess, to find out any thing like this in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; any thing that favours of worldly interest, either in the first Founder of our faith, or in any of his Apostles, who were the first propagators of it. Our Lord freely preached against whatever he found blameable in the people: He spared not their most beloved errors, nor framed his doctrines to indulge them in any one wicked practice, how predominant soever amongst them. He was so far from courting those in greatest esteem with them, that he was most sharp and bitter against them: I mean the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; for on all occasions he detected their hypocrisies, laid open their wicked practices, and condemned their iniquity. When our Lord took on him to be the promised *Messiah*, he did it not, according to the notions of the *Jews*, to be a secular prince, to deliver them from their enemies, and to restore the kingdom of *David* at *Jerusalem*, and there reign in great glory and splendor, over the whole house of *Israel*; but he came in a character altogether contrary to this. He told them, *His kingdom was not of this world*; not temporal, but spiritual. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Instead of conquests over enemies, extent of power, and a flourishing state of prosperity, which

which they dream'd of, he preached to them mortification, repentance and self-denial; and his Apostles followed his example. 2^{dly}, An imposture must always have wicked men for the authors of it: For thus to impose upon mankind is the worst of cheats; to paum a false religion on them, is the highest injustice, most dishonouring to God, and ruining to man. 'Tis such a consummate piece of iniquity, that 'tis impossible any one can arrive thereto, without having first corrupted himself in a great degree in all things else. That *Mahomet* was such an one, we have formerly seen in the history of his life*: But who ever charged Christ or his Apostles with any thing like this? Not *Celsus*, nor *Porphyry*, nor *Julian*, or any other of the Heathens or *Jews*, the bitterest enemies to Christianity; which they would not spare to have done, could they have found such an accusation. It cannot be said, that they could not have that knowledge of their lives and actions, as was sufficient to discern their faults and miscarriages. Tho' *Mahomet* acted his imposture in a remote part of *Arabia*, among a people who by vast desarts were in a manner cut off from converse with the rest of mankind, and had none to be witnesses, but those who embraced his forgery; yet this could not conceal his faults and wickednesses. But Christianity had not its birth in such an obscure hole; nor did our Lord and his Apostles make their appearance among such illiterate Barbarians, but in one of the most open stages of the world, at *Jerusalem* and in *Judea*; not in that age, when that nation was separate from others, but when they had mingled with other nations, and were forced to admit other nations to mingle with them, by being made a province of the *Roman* empire, which brought soldiers and merchants of other countries, and any who pleased to reside among them. To be sure, in such a place, could they have found any thing to cast a blot on the religion our Lord and his Apostles taught, we should have enough of it; yet their bitterest enemies, for several centuries, could not find any thing of this nature, as we shall hear in the following history. 3^{dly}, If Christ or his

* See pag. 54. to pag. 62.

Apostles had been wicked persons, thus to impose upon us a false religion, their wickedness and the interest they drove at, must have appeared in the contexture of the Religion itself: and the books in which 'tis contained, would have proved this against them, as the *Alcoran* doth against *Mahomet*; every chapter of which almost yields manifest proofs of the wicked affections of the man, breathing rapine, bloodshed, and lust, and the self-interest he drove at for gratifying of them. But we challenge all the enemies of our faith, to use their utmost skill to make the least discovery of these, or any thing like them in the books of the New Testament. They have already gone through the scrutiny of many ages, and all manner of adversaries, and none have been able to tax them herewith. But on the contrary, their whole design is to withdraw our hearts from the present world, and fix them on that which is to come: and therefore do not inculcate fighting, bloodshed, and conquest, as the *Alcoran*; but enjoin mortification, repentance, and self-denial, to abstain from all evil in thought, word, and action; to abandon the pomp and vanity of this world; to live soberly, righteously, and holily; to endure tribulations, afflictions, and persecutions, which shall attend the disciples of Christ; that we may be happy in the enjoyment of God, as our portion here, and for ever glorious and blessed hereafter.

4thly, The next mark of an imposture, is, that it must unavoidably contain in itself several palpable falsities, whereby may be made appear the falshood of all the rest: For whoever invents a lye, can never do it so cunningly and knowingly, but still there must be some flaw or other left in it, which will expose it to a discovery. By this we distinguish supposititious authors from those which are genuine, and fabulous writers from true historians. If we examine the *Alcoran* of *Mahomet* by this method, nothing can be more plainly convicted of falshood, than that must be by it: for tho' in that book he allows both the Old and New Testament to be of divine authority; yet in a multitude of instances he differs from both, even in matters of fact and history, which if once true, must evermore be the same: as, by a very gross blunder,

Alc. Chap. 3. he makes the Virgin *Mary*, the mother of our Saviour, to be the same with *Miriam*, the sister of *Moses*: besides many other immoralities in that book, to give way for his lust, as has been before observed. But there is nothing in the New Testament of that nature: the facts were done in the open view of the world, and never contradicted by the greatest enemies of our religion; and the event justifies the truth of all the prophecies, and shews that the author of them was in the secrets of the Almighty.

Lastly, An imposture can never be established without force and violence; for the search of the inquisitive would still find it out. To prevent this, *Mahomet* forbade all disputes about his Religion, and persecuted with war all that would not submit thereto. But our Redeemer commands us to *search the Scriptures*, to *examine and try ourselves*: neither did he nor his Apostles make use of any force, to establish the Religion they taught. Yea, all the force and powers of the world, for at least three centuries, were employed against it. Yet, in spite of all the world, it prevailed over the world, by the dint of its own truth only*. Therefore upon the whole, Christianity has nothing of imposture in it, but every thing does demonstrate, that 'tis the only Religion sent of God for our Salvation.

In the *sixth* place, tho' the evidence already alledged be sufficient, yet we shall add, that the history of the New Testament is confirmed by the testimony of adversaries, *Jews* and *Heathens*, writers of credit, who lived in the same age wherein these things were done, or near to it. And first of all, by the testimony of *Josephus* the *Jew*: he says †, *At this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if we may call him a man, for he did wonderful works, and was a teacher of men, who willingly received the truth, and had many, both of Jews and Gentiles, his followers. This was Christ, who, being accused by the princes of our nation,*

* See this Argument more fully handled in Dr. *Prideaux's* Letter to the Deists.

† Antiq. lib. 18. cap. 4. Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τὸν ἔχρονον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἄνθρωπος, &c.

nation, was crucified by Pilate. Nevertheless, they who from the first loved him, did not cease to do so; for he appeared to them again alive on the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold this and many other things concerning him; and to this time the tribe of Christians, named from him, do continue. Tho' some controvert this place, as not genuine, I see no reason to question it, since 'tis to be found in all the copies of *Josephus*, whether print or manuscript. 'Tis quoted by the ancient ecclesiastick writers of best credit, as *Eusebius**, *Jerom*†, *Isidorus Pelusiota*‡, *Sozomen*||, *Georgius Cedrenus***, *Nicephorus*††, and *Suidas*|||. Neither is it probable that so diligent an historian in all the affairs of the *Jews*, would be silent concerning our Lord Jesus, whose preaching, life and death made so great revolutions, not in that nation only, but gained so many disciples over the whole world. Who can conceive that *Josephus* should think *John* the baptist, and *James* the brother of our Lord, worthy of such elogies as he gives them[*], and their Lord and Master be passed over in silence? Besides, the style and phrase is like to that of *Josephus*, as was long ago observed by the learned *Huetius*[†], where he also at large vindicates this testimony, from the objections some have raised against it.

That our Lord was born in a little city of *Judea*, of a poor woman espoused to a carpenter, and that he fled into *Egypt*, is owned by *Celsus*[‡], an inveterate enemy to Christianity. That he was born in *Bethlehem*, is confirmed by the tables of the *Romans*, where the publick taxes were recorded; to which *Justin Martyr*, in his second apology, and *Tertullian* in his apology and books against *Marcion*, as does *Chrysostom* and others, oft appeal; which they would not have done, if these had not been then extant. That a new star appeared at his birth,

* Hist. lib. 1. cap. 11. Dem. Evang. lib. 4.

† De scriptoribus in Joseph. operum tom. 1. pag. m. 123.

‡ Lib. 4. Epist. 125.

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 1.

** Hist. Comp. pag. 196.

†† Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 38.

||| In *Ιωσηφ*.

[*] Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 8.

[†] Demon. Evang. pag. m. 33, & seq.

[‡] Apud Origen. contra Celsum, lib. 1.

birth, that wise men out of the *East* came to him, *Julian* does not deny; but endeavours to accommodate the rising of the star to natural causes [||]. The dreadful cruelty of *Herod* in murdering the infants, is owned by *Macrobius*, when he writes of the jests of *Augustus*, he tells that the Emperor said, *He would rather be Herod's hog us than his son* [**]. The miracles which *Jesus* did, the declared enemies of the Christians, even *Celsus* and *Julian*, never durst deny. *Julian* says expressly, *Jesus, who lived about 300 years ago, did no memorable act, but that he cured the lame and the blind, and adjured devils at Bethsaida and Bethany.*——But *Jesus, who commanded unclean spirits, who walked on the sea, who did cast out devils, and, as you say, made the Heaven and the Earth; tho' none of his disciples, but only John, durst say so**, &c. This is as ample a confession as we can expect from such an adversary. The *Jews*, who wrote the *Talmud*, were avowed enemies to our Redeemer, yet there they own the truth of his miracles †. *Porphyry*, another declared adversary, as cited by *Eusebius*, says ‡, *Æsculapius and the rest of the gods have withdrawn their converse with men; for since Jesus began to be worshipped, no man has received any publick help or benefit by the gods.* *Tacitus* owns the truth of our Lord's death, saying, *The author of this religion was Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea; whereby, tho' this detestable superstition was suppressed for the present, yet did it break out again, not only in Judea, the fountain of the mischief, but in the very city of Rome itself, where whatever is wicked and shameful, meets together, and is greatly advanced into reputation* ||. The wonderful darkening of the Sun at our Lord's death, and earthquake, is recorded by *Phlegon*, whom *Eusebius* calls an excellent computer of the *Olympiads*, and that he wrote

[||] Vid. Huetii Dem. Evang. pag. m. 29.

[**] Macrobii Saturnalia, lib. 2. cap. 4.

* Apud Cyrillum contra Julianum, lib. 6. pag. m. 132, & 146.

† Talmud, parte 4. lib. 6.

‡ De Præp. Evang. lib. 5. cap. 1. pag. m. 179.

|| Annalium lib. 15. cap. 44.

wrote in the 202^d Olympiad. He says *, *Then was a great and wonderful eclipse beyond any that ever happened. The day at the sixth hour was so far turned into dark night, that the stars appeared, and an earthquake in Bithynia did overthrow many houses in the city of Nice.* Now, this darkening of the Sun, recorded by *Phlegon*, and that in the holy Evangelists, at our Lord's death, are one and the same; for both happened the same year, viz. the 18th of *Tiberius*; the same hour, viz. the 6th hour of the day; and a great earthquake made both more memorable. Therefore *Tertullian*, when pleading the cause of the Christians against the Heathen, appeals to their publick tables and records as witnesses to this fact †. *Lucianus* of *Antioch* the martyr, appeals to the archives of *Nicomedia*, before the president of the city; Consult, says he, your annals, and you'll find, that in the time of *Pilate*, while *Christ* suffered in the middle of the day, the Sun did disappear, and chase away the day. 'Tis also observable, what is reported in the history of *China*, written by *Hadrianus Gresslonius* ‡, that the Chinese remark, That at the same time we Christians compute *Christ* suffered in the month of April, an extraordinary eclipse, beyond the ordinary laws and observations of the motions of the planets, then happened; at which event *Quamvutius* the Emperor was very much moved. Other testimonies concerning the truth and progress of Christianity, we may have in the following chapters of this book. What has been advanced does prove, that the history of many matters of fact in the New Testament, is confirmed by the testimony of adversaries, *Jews* and *Heathens*, who lived in the same age wherein these things were done, or near to it.

In the last place, as the Christian Religion is most certain, so 'tis most excellent. These two go hand in hand together; and therefore all that has been said in this chapter, to demonstrate the truth of our holy Religion,

* Apud Eusebium in chronico ad annum Christi 33.

† Tertul. Apolog. cap. 21.

‡ Apud Huetium Dem. Evang. pag. m. 30.

ligion, does also prove its excellency. *There is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**, but by the name of *Jesus*. The Religion which he has taught, is confirmed by all the prophets, who declare with one consent, that *Jesus* is the *Messias*, *that whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins*†. 'Tis confirmed by a constant succession of testimonies, every one of them more clear and convincing than another: By *John the Baptist*, a person foretold in the Old Testament, who sealed his testimony with his blood under the New, and cannot be suspected to be byassed by compliance or interest; by the testimony of the Apostles, who ratified their doctrine by the sore sufferings they endured; by the blessed Three, *who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit*. The glorious *Jehovah* confirmed it by a voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*. This was uttered audibly at our Redeemer's baptism, and again repeated at his transfiguration. The Holy Ghost confirms it, by accompanying the Gospel with power, in the conviction and conversion of sinners; and the Son of God confirms it by his life, death, resurrection and manifestations. The very consciences of men do testify, that the Christian Religion is well calculated to relieve us of our fears, to comfort us under afflictions, to make us humble under abundance, to support us under poverty, distresses, crosses and losses; to sanctify our natures, subdue our corruptions, pardon our guilt, and supply all our necessities. The very enemies of our holy Religion attest the truth thereof, as is already made evident. Why do the *Jews* so readily hearken to impostors, falsely pretending to be the *Messias*, but because the time of the coming of the true *Messias* is already past? The Wisdom of God has thought fit to confirm our Religion by a series of events, that render the truth thereof past dispute; as the ruin of the four monarchies, who in their turns afflicted and oppressed the Church of God, *whose power was broken, that the God of heaven may set up the kingdom of our Redeemer, which shall never be*

* Acts iv. 12.

† Acts x. 43. Luke i. 68—70.

be destroyed, but shall stand for ever *. The ruin of the *Jewish* state, and the desolation of the holy land, foretold by *Daniel* †, was in order that the Christian Church may be established, and the Gentiles converted, and was attended with such remarkable circumstances, as do prove it to be the Work of God. Other Religions invented by men, are absurd and unreasonable, as has been above demonstrated, and shall be in the progress of this treatise. Other Religions cover themselves with mysterious silence, and affected darkness; but the Rules of our holy Religion, are open to every body in the Book of God, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; they need not be covered with silence, dissimulation, or any disguise. The heathen philosophers mocked at the superstition of the people, and the people did not understand the religion of the philosophers. But the Christian Religion is satisfying and edifying to learned and unlearned. 'Tis sublime to the highest speculation of the learned; clear and plain to the most simple and unlearned, without the least degree of baseness. Other religions are sensual and brutish. The heathens represented their gods in bodily shape, they served them with theatrical shews, bloody diversions of gladiators, immodest profane games; yea, in many places they offered to them inhuman bloody human victims. The priests of *Baal* cut themselves with knives and launces; the *Samaritans* and *Jews* disputed with fury, if God should be worshipped at *Jerusalem*, or at the temple at *Gerizim*. The *Mahometans* worship toward *Mecca*, receive the law of a vicious impostor; their religion teaches them only sensual rewards and punishments, and is advanced by violence and oppression. But Christianity teaches, that *God is a Spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and truth; that we should have charity toward all men, and be fruitful in good works*. Other religions debase God, and elevate men. The heathens made their deities monstrous; and their great men, who were monsters in wickedness, they made gods. They worshipped birds, beasts, and creeping things, serving the creature more than

* Dan. ii. 44.

† Chap. ix. 26, 27.

than the Creator. But our holy Religion points out our God to be an infinite, independent, spiritual and eternal Being, who made the world, and all that therein is; all we have, we receive from him, and we cannot render any acceptable service to him, without his grace and assistance. This humbles all flesh, and exalts divine grace.

Secondly, The Christian Religion is of great advantage to society: it strengthens government and civil society among men, commanding us to obey our Superiours, to *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God those which are God's*. This will suppress those evils and abominations which defiled heathen countries, of which we shall hear in the second and seventh chapters of this book. This will prevent thieving, robbery, idolatry, bloodshed, and many other disorders and vices, which, by the Blessing of God, on good education and instruction in the principles of Christianity, might be removed and reformed, and the rising generation made useful both in church and state. The reason why there is so little of this, is, because the Rules of our holy Religion are so little followed. What is the world without Christianity? Nothing but a barbarous wilderness, a cage for devils and unclean spirits! 'Tis this that teaches the duty both of princes and people, that makes us better men, more governable, and better subjects; and therefore is of great and excellent advantage even to civil society among men.

Thirdly, If we look on Christians as an ecclesiastick society, here will another excellency of our holy Religion shine. There were before the incarnation of our Redeemer, many societies in the world, linked together by bonds of laws, common interests or neighbourhood, yet divided in their inclinations and affections. But the Gospel discovers a society of people, the Church of God, living in different times and places of the world, of various stations and conditions; yet *one body, one spirit, having one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all**. A society that has

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* Ephes. iv. 4—6.

resisted the persecutions of the greatest monarchs, that has renounced the charms of the world, been victorious over *Satan's* temptations, hating vice, despising the efforts of tyrants, submitting willingly to the cross of Christ; *as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing* †: as a bush burning, yet not consumed, who in several ages have kept the same sentiments. The superstitions of the *Greeks, Romans*, and other nations, are dwindled into nothing; they serve only to amuse children ||: But the Christian Religion lasts for ever; it grows under the cross, and recovers itself out of its ruins, as the history of the church in all ages does discover.

Fourthly, The Excellency of the Christian Religion, appears from the purity of its scope and end. The plain and obvious design thereof, is to glorify God, to subdue our corruptions, to teach us to live soberly, righteously and holily, to maintain love and charity among men, to bring forth good works, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, so as to attain eternal happiness when time shall be no more. Now 'tis evident this cannot be the aim of *Satan*, a wicked and malicious spirit, the enemy of mankind. Nor can it be designed by our corrupt nature, which only seeks to gratify the lusts of the flesh. Nor can it be effectuated by carnal policy, which may restrain us from those enormities punishable by men, but can never reform our hearts, nor hinder the inward inclinations of the mind to sin. This Religion then that promotes such holy ends, must descend from the God of mercy and grace, who *wills men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*. All the exhortations, precepts, promises, histories, and prophecies in Scripture, tend to promote this design. The book of God is not filled with empty speculations and curious arts; but is stored with what is solid and edifying.

Fifthly, The Christian Religion affords an admirable remedy to all the necessities and miseries of man. We since the fall are under sin and guilt, liable to condemnation. It discovers our Redeemer, who has made satisfaction

† 2 Corinth. vi. 9, 10.

|| See above pag. 96.

faction to divine justice, and suffered that punishment which was due to us by sin. If we accept of what he has done in our room, we shall be absolved from the guilt of sin. And tho' our nature be corrupt, bent upon sin and wickedness; yet he sanctifies and purifies us by grace, and the influences of his Holy Spirit; gives us strength to oppose indwelling sin, to fight against lust, to perform duties, to endure difficulties, and to persevere to the end. He cures our maladies, relieves us in our distresses, and perfects a work of grace in us, beyond what all human virtue, or precepts of morality can do.

Sixthly, Our holy Religion does declare the Glory of God as our independent sovereign, the infinitely perfect, unchangeable, eternal, incomprehensible Being. It does manifest his wisdom and power in creating the world out of nothing: That he orders all by his Providence, and disposes every thing for good to his people. Here we have the glorious displays of everlasting redeeming love. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life* *. Here we have discoveries of divine fulness treasured up in our Redeemer, from which we receive grace, and more grace; of divine faithfulness, in performing his promises; of mercy extended to our misery; and patience to wait on our repenting. We are directed, *whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do all to the Glory of God* †; to pray always that his name may be sanctified; that his *will may be done in earth as in heaven* ‡. And at the same time we are conducted to true happiness by believing in the Redeemer, submitting to the Will of God without murmuring, setting our affections on things above, that we may enjoy God in this life, and may be admitted to eternal happiness in heaven, in the life to come.

Seventhly, The Excellency of the Christian Religion shines in the purity of its morals. The strictness of its morals, and the mysterious obscurity of some of its doctrines, are means in the hand of God to enlighten our minds, and hide pride from our eyes; to replenish

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* John iii. 16.

† 1 Cor. x. 31.

‡ Matth. vi. 9, 10.

our souls with good principles, without flattering our lusts; to regulate our manners, and humble our corruptions. We cannot reflect on the characters of these morals, without being obliged to acknowledge they come from God. For, *first*, they not only subdue our lusts, but are a paradox to our reason, as * *blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn; blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you* †. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.* The moral paradoxes of heathen philosophers were far inferiour to these. *2dly*, The Christian morals mortify and subdue our corruptions, self-love, and the pleasures of the flesh. Pride and vain-glory are buried and hid from the Christians eyes: *we must not be angry at our brother without a cause; nor hate our neighbour in our heart; nor say to him, thou fool; nor look on a woman to lust after her* ‡. *We must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Christ, or we cannot be his disciples* ||. We must abandon all beloved sins: were they as near or dear to us as *a right eye*, we must *pluck them out*; or as *a right hand*, we must *cut them off* **. Certainly our blessed Lord, who taught these sublime and necessary precepts, is a teacher sent from God. *3dly*, All the principles of the Christian morals go on the foot of humility, *that we must be meek and lowly; poor in spirit; like little children; wise as serpents, harmless as doves.* *4thly*, They are comprehended in very few words; as, *to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.* Yet we cannot perform this, but by the assistance of divine grace; nor taste of all the sweet advantages of religion in the full extent, in this imperfect state: but we may have such a prelibation and foretaste of its excellency, in the serenity of mind, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, assurance of our interest in the love of God, hearing of prayer, manifestations

* Matth. v. 3—11.

|| Matth. xvi. 24.

† Matth. v. 44.

‡ Matth. v. 22, 28.

** Matth. v. 29, 30.

tions of divine favour, deliverance from doubts, fears and innumerable distresses, and charming views of the love of Christ, as may endear a religious life, commend the ways of God, strengthen us for his service, and make us long for those eternal pleasures, which are at God's right-hand for evermore.

Finally, Even the mysteries of our Religion are such as commend it: They are so great and sublime, so consonant to the nature of things, and so nearly linked with the principles of right reason; *they are such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive. Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, and received up into glory**. They are not like the fables and reveries of the poets, which wicked minds greedily received, even when reason condemned them. The creation of the world by God almighty, the redemption of mankind by the ministry of the Mediator, the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, the communion of saints, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the dead, and life everlasting, are truths majestick and reasonable, having nothing in them that is absurd to a mind, that is not blinded with prejudice or infidelity. If there be any thing in these, or other truths, which we cannot easily comprehend, while our soul is darkened with sin in this imperfect state; let it be considered, had we remained in a state of innocence, we had been under no such difficulty; and when we are admitted into glory, we shall understand them clearly. The holy angels know them exactly; the infinite mind most perfectly. Why should we admit carnal reasonings against divine Revelation? Rather let us humble ourselves before God, and seek that he may cause us to understand the wonders in his law. Many mysteries that were hid under a veil in the Old Testament, are clearly discovered in the Gospel, even the promises of the resurrection, of the last judgment, and life eternal, are more full and evident than before the coming of Christ. And the reason is plain, because our Redeemer knew plainly and perfectly

* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

the whole Will of God, and hath manifested the same to his Church. Tho' we cannot, in our present state, know all these mysterious truths perfectly; yet, if with humility we enquire into them, and with faith and love we receive, believe, and improve them, then they will appear bright, useful, and edifying to us.

C H A P. II.

Of the Origin and Progress of Idolatry, from the Creation of the World to the Birth of Christ; where the Deities of the Syrians, Phœnicians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Greeks, Romans, and other Nations in that Period are considered.

IN the former Chapter I have confirmed the Truth of our Holy Christian Religion; which God, by his gracious Providence, does protect, preserve and advance in the world, making *Satan's* kingdom fall before it like lightning. But before I enter upon the overthrow of heathenish idolatry, 'tis necessary we should consider the state of the heathen world, and the great progress idolatry had made before the incarnation of our Redeemer. In order to this, we must look back to the fall of our first parents.

When *Adam*, by his sin, made apostacy from God, he forfeited his right to the tree of life, and made himself liable to death and all miseries; blindness, ignorance, superstition, and a deluge of evils did creep in upon the minds of his posterity. *Cain*, and his wicked race, did carry the defection still further: he *went out from the presence of the Lord**. And 'tis probable he, or his offspring, did set up societies separate from the true Church that was continued in the race of *Seth*. Yet we have few footsteps of idolatry in the *Ante-diluvian* world. After the flood it made considerable progress, especially after

* Gen. iv. 26.

after the vain attempt of building the tower of *Babel*, and the confusion of languages, which God inflicted on that wicked age for their sin. This confusion happened about the one hundred and second year after the flood. The heathens can give no distinct account thereof: we learn it from the sacred Scripture. The posterity of *Nimrod* carried idolatry to *Chaldea*, *Babylon*, and other places. The offspring of *Cham*, on whom his father pronounced a curse*, seem to have taken it into *Egypt*, and other parts of *Africa*; of which *Dr. Cumberland*, in his *Phenician* history, finds some footsteps, from the fragment of *Sanhoniathon*, preserved by *Eusebius*†; of which afterward. It is yet more certain, that *Abraham's* progenitors, *Terah*, *Nabor* and *Haran*, served other Gods‡. If we reckon this from the birth of *Abraham*, it will be about 352 years after the flood, 2008 years from the creation of the world.

Before we enter further upon the origin of idolatry, 'tis proper we explain what we understand by the name. *Idolatry* originally then is a *Greek* word, a composition of two others. The first εἶδωλον, a diminutive of εἶδος, signifying an *image*. The second λατρεία, signifying *worship*. Hence is usher'd in another signification of larger extent, viz. the word *idol* is taken for every thing, men place in God's room, and pay divine honours to, whether it be men, the work of men's hands, or the product of God and nature. Thus the Apostle says||, *We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one.* In this sense 'tis taken by the Septuagint, 1 *Chr.* xvi. 26. οἱ θεοὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰδωλα, *All the Gods of the heathen are idols.* This signification of the word is established by custom. If we shew an excessive love to a thing, 'tis said, we *idolize* it. Idolatry then implies not only the worshipping of images, but also of creatures. Thus there are two sorts of it: in the *first*, they worshipped the works of God, the sun, moon, stars, angels, devils, men and beasts. And in the *second* they worshipped the work of their hands, even images.

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* Gen. ix. 25. † De præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 9.

‡ Joshua xxiv. 2, 14, 15.

|| 1 Cor. viii. 4.

Some people adored God under the representation of an image. Thus the *Israelites* worshipped the true God who had brought them out of *Egypt*, under the representation of a golden calf; and the ten tribes, in the reign of *Jeroboam* and his successors, did the same, under the figure of the calves set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*.

Dr. *Owen** divides the whole of idolatrous worship into *Sabaism* and *Hellenism*; the former consists in the worship of sun, moon and stars, and the host of heaven; the latter is the worship the *Greeks* and *Romans* added, viz. the veneration of great men dead and gone, and of *Demons*. *Sabaism* was the most ancient of the two, as appears from the book of *Job*, one of the first books writ in the world; while he declares himself free of idolatry, he says †, *If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.* The law of God expressly condemns this ‡: but in *Job's* days they were not come to that height of folly and wickedness, as afterwards when they dedicated horses to the sun ||. They only then adored him by the actions of their body. These blinded nations perceiving these glorious luminaries do govern day and night, worshipped the creature more than the Creator, who is God blessed for ever. Tho' *Sabaism* be very ancient, yet I think it highly probable, that in some few ages after the flood, the nations who were strangers to the common-wealth of *Israel*, began to adore their great men who had founded their empire, as *Noah*, *Cham*, *Misraim*, and others; of which we may find some examples in the sequel of this chapter.

Dr. *Prideaux* gives his thoughts of the rise of idolatry thus **: *The true religion which Noah taught his posterity, was that which Abraham practised, the worshipping of one God, the supreme governour of all things, with hopes in his*
mercy

* *Theologoumena*, pag. m. 181. † *Job* xxxi. 26—28.

‡ *Deut.* iv. 19. and xvii. 3. || *2 Kings* xxiii. 11.

** *Connection of the History of the Old and New Testament*, Part 1. pag. m. 177.

mercy through a mediator. For the necessity of a mediator between God and man was a general notion, which obtained among all mankind from the beginning; for being conscious of their own meanness, vileness and impurity, they could not conceive how it was possible of themselves alone to have access to the all-holy, all-glorious, and supreme Creator and Governour of all things. They considered him as too high and too pure, and themselves too low and polluted for such a converse; and therefore concluded there must be a mediator, by whose means only they could make any address to him, and by whose intercession alone any of their petitions could be accepted of. But no clear revelation being then made of the mediator, whom God appointed, because as yet he had not been manifested to the world, they took upon them to address unto him by mediators of their own chusing: and their notion of the sun, moon and stars being, that they were tabernacles, or habitations of intelligences, which animated these orbs, in the same manner as the soul animates the body of man, and were causes of their motions, and that these intelligences were of a middle sort between God and them, they thought these the properest things to be mediators between God and them; and therefore the planets being the nearest of all these heavenly bodies, and generally look'd on to have the greatest influence on this world, they have made choice of them in the first place as their Gods-Mediators, who were to mediate with the supreme God for them, and to procure from him mercies and favours which they prayed for; and accordingly they directed divine worship to him as such. And here began all the idolatry that has been practised in the world.

Tho' Hellenism consists principally in the worship of dead men and Demons, yet the Grecians at first adored the sun, moon and stars, as even *Plato* owns*, that the first inhabitants of Greece did worship only those Gods whom the Barbarians do now, that is, the sun, the moon, and the stars; and perceiving all things to run in a continual course, they called them θεοὺς Gods, from, θεῖν to run. Tho' *Varro* among the Romans, and *Hesiod* among the Greeks, reckon thirty thousand Deities;

* In *Cratylus*.

Deities ; yet as their own poet tells them *, they had not so many by far in ancient times. But I shall afterward give an account of the idolatry practised among the *Greeks* and *Romans* : mean time I shall offer a remark concerning the antiquity and use of images.

The use of images, in the idolatrous worship of the *Gentiles*, was not by far so ancient as idolatry itself. *Laban's Teraphim* is the first image we find any where. *Eusebius* proves by the testimonies of *Plato*, *Porphyrus*, and several others, that neither the ancient *Egyptians*, nor *Phenicians*, nay, nor even the *Greeks*, had any images for a long time. He says †, *The first and most ancient men did not trouble themselves to build any temples, or make any images, because the art of painting and carving, and even of building, was not then invented ; neither was there any mention of those who were afterward called Gods, or Heroes. They had neither then Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, Apollo, Juno, nor Bacchus, nor any other male or female deity ; a great number of which were afterwards owned both by Greeks and Barbarians ; yea, there was no good nor evil Demon then worshipped, but only the stars which appear in the heavens. The Persians did preserve their worship free of images for a long time, as appears by Herodote ‡, who says, The Persians had neither altars, nor temples, nor statues ; they laughed at those who worshipped the Gods in such a manner ; they sacrificed on the tops of mountains to the king of heaven, whom they called Jupiter ; for they did not take their Gods from among men, as the Greeks. Plutarch says ||, King Numa forbade the Romans to represent God in the form of man or beast ; nor was there any painted or graven image of a deity admitted among them for the space of the first hundred and sixty years ; all which time their temples and chapels were free and pure from idols and images, which seemed too mean and*
beggarly

* Juvenal. Satyr. 13. ver. 46. & seqq.

— Nec turba Deorum

Talis, ut est hodie ; contentaque sidera paucis
Numinibus miserum urgebant Atlanta minori
Pondere —

† De præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 9. pag. m. 29. Edit. 1688.

‡ Lib. 1. cap. 131. || Life of Numa, Engl. Edit. Vol. 1. pag. 24, 25.

beggarly representations of God, to whom no access was allowed, but by the mind raised and elated by divine contemplation. Varro, cited by Augustine, assures us*, That the ancient Romans for more than one hundred and seventy years worshipped their Gods without images: If they had done so still, the Gods might have been served with greater purity; and he concludes, that those who first brought in images into worship, took away the fear due to the deities, and led people into error. It was Tarquinius Priscus, who introduced images in imitation of the Greeks. Athenagoras says†, That even among the Greeks, till the art of painting and statuary was found out, there was no mention of images of the Gods, but Saurias Samius, Craton Sicyonius, Cleanthes Corinthius, and Core Corinthia, invented these arts.—Dædalus and Theodorus Milesius added to them. Soon after the images and statues of the Gods were framed, we can yet relate the names of those workmen who made them: Diana of Ephesus and Minerva, whom the Greeks call Ἀθήνη, were framed by Endyus, a scholar of Dædalus; the Cnidian Venus, by Praxiteles; the Samian and Argive Juno, by Smilis; and the Epidaurian Æsculapius, by the hands of Phidias.—If they be Gods, why are they not from the beginning? Why stood they in need to be framed by the art of man? Nay, to be sure they are only earth, stones, and matter fashioned by curious art. Tacitus says of the Germans, they had no images nor footsteps of foreign superstition‡. When images were first used, they were made of coarse materials. While sculpture was in its infancy, some of their statues were made of potters clay, well burned like our earthen-vessels, and afterward painted with vermilion. After that, they chused wood as the easiest for carving. Many statues of idols in the Old-Testament times were made thereof ||: yea, there were some people, who made things without any human resemblance, the objects of their devotion. Hence we find frequent mention of *Deos Caudicarios*,

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* De civitate Dei, lib. 4. cap. 31.

† Legatio pro Christianis, pag. 16, 17. Edit. 1686.

‡ Nulla simulacra, nullum peregrinae superstitionis vestigium. De moribus Germanorum, pag. m. 657. || Isa. xlv. 14—18.

trunks of trees turned into Gods. *Arnobius* informs us *, *the* Arabians worshipped a stone, *the* Scythians a sword, *the* Thespians a branch, *the* Icarians a smoothed piece of wood for *the* Goddess *Diana*; *those* of *Pessinus*, a flint for *the* mother of *the* Gods, and *the* Romans, an half-pike for *Mars*; *these* were the emblems of *their* deities, a sword and half-pike for *the* God of war. Indeed the Gentiles did not consider their most curious statues as really Gods, but as emblems of those deities they worshipped. It was the common opinion, that these images were only to revive in men the remembrance of the object of their adoration. Hence *Celsus* asks, *Who, but a fool, can imagine these images are real Gods?* † The heathens when pressed by the arguments of the Christians, on account of their image-worship, said, *You err; we do not adore the wood, brass, gold or silver, as if these metals were of themselves Gods; but we worship the Gods, who by virtue of the dedication inhabit these images* ‡. To which *Lactantius* gives this answer, *If the Gods are present by virtue of the consecration, what occasion is there for images? What need have I for my friend's picture, if my friend be near me in person? God, who is a spirit every where present, never absent, needs no image to supply his place* ||. The same answer may be returned to the defences of the papists, concerning their idolatrous image-worship. Thus far concerning the origin of idolatry. I shall now consider the state thereof in the several nations of the ancient heathen world before the coming of Christ; which will further discover its origin, and also how absurd it is, and how great a mercy we enjoy, who by the light of the Gospel are delivered from it.

The Greek and Roman idolatry took its rise from that of the *Egyptians*, *Phenicians* and *Syrians*. 'Tis a certain maxim, that religion, as well as learning, and mankind itself, had its first origin in the east; therefore we shall first explain the state of idolatry in these eastern countries, and particularly give some account of the idols

* *Contra gentes*, lib. 6. pag. m. 222.

† *Apud Origen. contra Celsum*, lib. 7.

‡ *Arnobius*, lib. 6. pag. 229. || *Institut.* lib. 2. cap. 2.

idols mentioned in the sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament.

The *Teraphim* is the most ancient name given to an idol in the Word of God; see the Texts quoted at the foot of the page*. I shall not insist upon the several opinions concerning them, but do conceive they were human figures made to receive the virtue of superior bodies, tho' I know not how they used them. That these *Teraphim* had a human shape, is very probable from the history of *Michal*, the daughter of *Saul*, who placed a *Teraphim* in *David's* bed, to deceive the guard sent to watch him. This sense is applicable to the texts already cited; neither does *Hosea* iii 4. overturn it. The words of that text are, *The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without Teraphim.* Where the prophet gives us an exact description of the state of the *Jews* under their dispersion, without a king or civil government, without a sacrifice and ephod, without true worship, and without an image or *Teraphim*, that is, without idolatrous worship. By the by we may take notice, that the *Hebrew* word *Teraphim*, is frequently in our version rendred image. The prophet says, the *Jews* shall not be meer heathen idolaters, addicted to magick; they shall neither ask counsel of the true God, nor consult the false oracle of *Teraphim*. Thus *David Kimchi* a *Jew* understands that text. The *Teraphim* probably were not used by *Laban* for magick divination; but that they were afterwards made use of for that end, appears from *Ezekiel* xxi. 21. *For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way to use divination; he made his arrows bright, he consulted with images; in the Hebrew, Teraphim.* *Zech.* x. 2. *The idols, or Teraphim, have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lye.* I might here have digressed to speak of the several sorts of divination among the heathen: they who are curious may see what the learned *Mr. Selden* has writ concerning it†; but I shall

* *Gen.* xxxi. 19, 30, 34. *Judge* xvii. 4, 5. and xviii. 5, 14. *1 Sam.* xix. 13. *2 Kings* xxiii. 24. *Ezek.* xxi. 21. *Hos.* iii. 4. *Zech.* x. 2.

† *De Diis Syris syntagma*, cap. 1. 2.

shall keep to the subject I am upon. The *Teraphim* seem to have been domestick Gods, the same called *Lares*, or domestick tutelar Gods, by the *Latins*. *Laban* calls them his Gods, not his God. *Mons. Jurieu* † conceives they were the images of *Noah* and *Shem*; of *Noah*, as the common father of the world after the flood, and of *Shem* as the patriarch of the family of *Laban*. Had they been more than two, *Rachel* could not easily have concealed them among her camels furniture. *Ovid* represents the *Lares* as two, when he speaks of the nymph *Lara* their mother ‡. As to the external form of the *Teraphim*, *Jurieu* represents it thus ||. The eastern nations preserved in one of the remote parts of their house the relicks of their ancestors: if they had none of these, their posterity being numerous, they erected empty tombs of stone, wood or earth, and upon these they set the *Teraphim* at the two extremities. *Micah* ** having got a sight of some of these oracles among the heathen, and being ignorant of the abominations they practised by them, thought they might be sanctified by dedicating them to God, tho' by idolaters they were designed for enquiring of the dead: but this was his error.

Next to the *Teraphim*, the history of the Old Testament mentions the *Golden Calf*, cast and worshipped by the *Israelites* in the wilderness*, at the foot of mount *Horeb*, when but a few days before they had heard the awful voice of God, forbidding the worship of images. This dreadful sin does sufficiently discover the brutish inclinations of that people. The *Jews* own all the miseries that have since befallen them, are morsels of the Golden Calf. 'Tis questioned if this idol had the figure of a calf, or of a tall ox. In the book of *Exodus* 'tis called a calf; the psalmist calls it an ox; (†) *They changed their glory*

† Histoire critique des Dogmes & des Cultes, vol. 2. cap. 3.

‡ Fastorum lib. 2. ver. 615.

*Fitque gravis geminosque parit qui compita servant,
Et vigilant nostrâ semper in æde Lares.*

|| *Jurieu* ibid. cap. 4.

** Judges xviii. 14.

* Exod. xxxii.

(†) Psal. cvi. 20.

glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. 'Tis probable it had the figure of a full-grown ox. The *Jews* say it weighed 200 quintals of gold; that is, as *Jurieu* computes it, 225 talents, or 20000 livres. As to the rise of this kind of idolatry, the *Israelites* did not invent it of themselves, but did imitate the *Egyptians*: having lived about 200 years in *Egypt*, their minds were corrupted with some of the abominations of that country, as several texts of Scripture do intimate. *Joshua* commands them, *to put away the Gods which their fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt: and serve the Lord* ||. The prophet *Ezekiel* minds them, *That they committed whoredoms in Egypt, they committed whoredoms in their youth* ‡. And *Stephen* the protomartyr, *That their fathers in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, make us Gods to go before us* **. All these texts declare, that they made the calf in imitation of the *Egyptians*. This may lead us to consider the idolatry of *Egypt*.

Tho' the *Egyptians* were reputed the wisest of the Gentiles, yet they appear in their religious worship of beasts, to have acted contrary to common sense. The prophet *Ezekiel* intimates that the *Jews* were tainted with it ††: *Behold every form of creeping things and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.* And the Apostle *Paul* (*) tells us, *That the Gentiles changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.* 'Tis alleged the worship of brutes was the veil under which were concealed the mysteries of their religion, as their morals were hidden under the hieroglyphicks. But 'tis abominable to adore sheep, cats, bulls, dogs, cows, storks, apes, birds of prey, wolves, and several sorts of oxen, as the *Egyptians* did, under whatever pretence. The very heathens ridiculed this kind of idolatry. *Lucian* speaks of

|| *Joshua* xxiv. 14.

†† *Ezek.* viii. 10.

‡ *Ezek.* xxiii. 3.

(*) *Rom.* i. 23.

** *Acts.* vii. 39, 40.

of it thus †, Go into Egypt, there you'll see fine things, worthy of heaven, forsooth; Jupiter with the face of a ram, Mercury as a fine dog, Pan is become a goat, another god is Ibis, another the crocodile, and another the ape. There many shaven priests gravely tell, the gods being afraid of the rebellion of the giants, lurked under these shapes; they mourn over the sacrifices, but if Apis their great god die, there is no body so profane as not to shave his head and mourn, tho' he had the purple hair of Nisus. This Apis is but a god chosen out of the flock. These things seem to me to require a Heraclitus or Democritus; the one to laugh at their madness, and the other to weep at their ignorance. Thus Lucian. The reader may also see at the bottom of the page, how Juvenal || and Virgil ‡ deride them.

Diodorus Siculus reports*, That a Roman soldier having killed a cat in Egypt, the mob ran to his house, to tear him in pieces, and neither the intreaties of the nobility, nor the terror of Rome, could free him from punishment, tho' he had done it ignorantly; which, says he, I do not tell from bare report, but, in my travels, I was eye-witness to it. The same author says**, That when a famine prevailed in Egypt, to that degree, that they were forced to eat the human flesh of one another; yet none was accused of tasting these sacred creatures. When a dog happened to die, the whole house went into mourning. And if any of these beasts die, if there be food laid up for the people in the house, 'tis impious.

† De sacrif. operum, tom. 1. pag. m. 369.

|| Juv. Sat. 15. ab initio.

*Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens
Ægyptus portenta colit? Crocodilon adorant
Pars hæc: illa pavet saturam serpentibus Ibim.
Effigies sacri nitet aurea Cercopitheci.*

*Illic ceruleos, hic piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur, nemo Dianam.
Porrum & cape nefas violare, ac frangere morsu.
O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis
Numina! Lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis
Mensa. Nefas illic foetum jugulare capella,
Carnibus humanis vesci licet.——*

‡ Æneid. 8. ver. 678. Omnigenūmq; Deum monstra & latrator Anubis

* Bibl. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 83.

** Ibid. cap. 84.

impious to make use of it. 'Tis recorded by * *Polyænus*, That when *Cambyfes*, Emperor of *Persia*, was making war against *Egypt*, he found it necessary to take the city *Pelufium*, which was a key to the whole country; and perceiving the garrison strong, and the besieged galling him with their arrows, he placed in the front of his army, who were to make the assault, a great number of cats, dogs, sheep, and the like animals, which were there reckoned sacred. The Egyptians not daring to throw a dart, or shoot an arrow, for fear of killing those creatures, he made himself easily master of the place. Each city and district in *Egypt* entertained a peculiar devotion for some beast or other, which, says *Diodorus Siculus* †, is easier to relate than to believe, unless one had seen it with their eyes. The city *Lentopolis* worshipped a lion; the city *Mendez*, a goat; *Memphis*, the *Apis*; the city of the sun, the *Mnevis*, and the people in the lake *Myris* adored the crocodile. These animals were maintained in or near the temples with delicate meats, were bathed, anointed, perfumed, had beds prepared for them, and she-ones kept like misses for their use. When any of them happened to die, they prepared sumptuous funerals for them, and tombs richer than for their own children. This idolatry had footing in *Egypt* in the time of *Moses* and the patriarchs; for when *Pharaoh* offered liberty for the *Israelites* to sacrifice in the land of *Egypt*, *Moses* replied, Shall we sacrifice to the Lord our God the abomination of the *Ægyptians* before their eyes, and will they not stone us ||? That is, if we sacrifice in *Egypt*, oxen, sheep, or goats, which are the gods of the *Egyptians*, they will massacre us. Hence *Moses* says, every shepherd is an abomination to the *Egyptians* ‡; for the shepherds were not scrupulous to kill and eat the beasts of their flock. *Origen*, against *Celsus*, speaks of a very foolish deity of the *Egyptians*; pardon me that I speak of it in *Latin*: *Taceo nunc eos Ægyptios, qui venerantur ventris crepitum* **. .

The

* *Stratagematum* lib. 7. pag. m. 485.|| *Exod.* viii. 26.‡ *Gen.* xvi. 34.** *Contra Celsum*, lib. 5. pag. m. 255.

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† *Bibl. Hist.* lib. 1. cap. 84.

The *Egyptians* had a veneration for all oxen, yet two were celebrated among them above all the rest. The first, called *Apis*, had his chief temple and residence in the city *Memphis*, called by the *Jews*, *Muph*. The second, called *Mnevis*, resided at *Heliopolis*, that is the city of the sun, called by the *Jews*, *On*, where *Potipherah*, in *Moses's* time, was high-priest. The marks of *Apis* were these, his body was to be all black, excepting a spot of white on his forehead; he was to have an eagle on the back, a crescent on the side, a node under the tongue called *Cantbarus*, the hair standing upright, the contrary way near the tail; he was to be conceived by lightning, and being conducted to *Memphis*, they placed him in a rich temple. He was not to live the full course of nature, but to be drowned in a sacred spring, and then to be buried with great pomp and noise. Once in a year they celebrated a feast in honour of his birth, for seven days; during which space, as they said, the crocodile did no harm to any body in the river. *Pliny* says*, “ That after *Apis* is buried, they seek for another with “ the same marks. They appear in mourning, and “ shave their hair till they find him. When he is found, “ he is conducted by the priests to *Memphis*, where are “ two temples or nuptial halls, intended for the prediction of future events. If he goes to one of these, it “ signifies a good omen; if to the other, bad fortune. “ As to private persons, he presages things to come, by “ taking or refusing those things they offer him to eat. “ *Cæsar Germanicus* offered him meat, but he turned “ his head to the other side, which portended that “ great man’s death, as happened soon after. When he “ appears abroad, guards are appointed for his free passage, to keep off the crowd: at the same time he is “ attended with a great many children, who sing verses “ to his praise.” This is the account we have of this beastly idol from *Pliny*, and from many other ancient authors †. If it be enquired, how could they find a beast with

* Hist. mundi, lib. 8. cap. 46. per totum.

† *Ælian* Hist. animalium, lib. 11. cap. 9. *Pompon. Mela*, lib. 1. cap. 9. *Plutarch* of Isis and Osiris. *Herodot.* lib. 3. cap. 27 — 30.

with all these marks? I answer with *Augustine* ||, that the *Egyptian* priests being magicians, it was no great matter to make the cow bring forth such a calf as they designed, and with such marks on his body. We see even human industry goes a great way. *Jacob*, by setting rods in the gutters, made *Laban's* sheep bring forth spotted and speckled lambs; and the arts of satan may easily deceive a superstitious deluded people to their own ruin. When the kingdom of satan fell like lightning after the death of our Saviour, the case changed; *Apis* could not be found. *Spartian* indeed tells us ‡, “ That the Emperor *Adrian* “ having settled affairs in *Britain*, received advice of a great “ sedition at *Alexandria*, occasion'd by finding the ox “ *Apis*, after many years vain search for him; which “ caused great tumults among the people, every place “ claiming the custody of him.” But even by this author it appears, that the religion of *Apis* was then in a manner buried in oblivion: For if it had not been so, they could not have contended for the place of his residence, which was unquestionably at *Memphis*. When *Julian* the emperor, commonly called the apostate, endeavoured to re-establish the *Egyptian* idolatry, *Ammianus Marcellinus* * does not tell us, that he succeeded in it, or that he found the ox *Apis*: so that this part of their religion was abolished a long time before the rest of the pagan worship, for want of the beast that had the requisite marks. But as long as they were able to meet with *Apis*, to be placed in the temple of *Memphis*, the people paid a singular devotion to him; they sacrificed victims, especially red oxen; and the women paid him a most infamous homage, by discovering their nakedness before him †.

Cambyfes, upon his return from his unsuccessful *Ethiopian* expedition, found the *Egyptians* rejoicing in the city *Memphis*, because they had found *Apis*. The Emperor conceiving they mocked him, commanded *Apis* to be brought to his presence, and laughing at such a foolish Deity, wounded him with his sword in the thigh, and

M 2

ordered

|| De civitate Dei, lib. 18, cap. 5.

‡ Vita Adriani.

* Lib. 22. pag. m. 574.

† Diod. Siculus, lib. 1. cap. 85.

ordered the priests to be whipped, and the people who observed such solemnities to be killed. Thus was the festival concluded, says *Herodote* *. The poor beast languished in the temple and died, and was buried privately by the priests. And the *Egyptians* say, that after this wicked fact, *Cambyfes* was still troubled with madness. *Plutarch* says, that *Apis* being killed, was thrown to the dogs, to be devoured by them; and therefore the *Egyptians* razed the dogs out of the catalogue of their Deities ‖. *Darius Ochus*, another *Persian* king, killed *Apis*, and eat him at a feast with his friends †. The *Egyptians* revenged themselves; for *Bagoas* the eunuch assassinated *Ochus*, and threw his body to the cats, and of his thigh-bone made hafts for swords, to represent the cruelty of this tyrant's mind, says *Ælian* ‡.

What was signified by this monstrous *Egyptian* idolatry, is not easy to conceive. Many fables have been invented to palliate its enormities. But 'tis not my business to make apology for these abominations of the Gentiles. *Diodorus Siculus* has been at some pains to varnish over these enormities; and *Plutarch*, who wrote his book in the reign of the Emperor *Trajan*, in his treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris*, endeavours many ways, not consistent among themselves, to explain these fables **, so as to bring those *Egyptian* rites, which then were in disgrace at *Rome*, into favour with that city, as agreeing in substance with the Religion of *Rome*, and other heathen countries, especially *Greece*. In which attempt he was unsuccessful, tho' he turns the *Egyptian* idolatry into an allegory. Others assert, that in *Egypt* they worshipped these beasts, by reason of the benefits they received from them: The ox, for its use in agriculture; the sheep, for their wool; the *Ibis*, by reason of its use in physick, and its eating serpents; the *Ichneumon*, a kind of rat, because it used to eat the crocodiles; and the crocodiles themselves, because they rendering the
passage

* Lib. 3. cap. 29, 30.

‖ Of *Isis* and *Osiris*, *Morals*, pag. m. 1305.

† Ibid. pag. 1291.

‡ *Varia Historia*, lib. 6. cap. 8.

** See *Cumberland's Phœnician History*, pag. 96.

passage of the *Nile* very dangerous, prevented the robbers of *Cyrene* from passing the river to pillage the country. 'Tis as probable that the animals worshipped in *Egypt*, were figures to represent their Gods. 'Tis well known that every one of the heathen Deities had some beast, tree, or plant consecrated to them: Thus the pigeon was dedicated to *Venus*, the dragon and the owl to *Minerva*, the peacock to *Juno*, the eagle to *Jupiter*, and the cock to *Esculapius* and the Sun. The *Egyptians* assigned to their Gods certain animals as their figures or representatives, and thus they were introduced into temples, as afterwards images were into some Christian Churches, and they began to worship them. *Herodote* says *, *The Egyptian men and women reckon it an honour to have the feeding, or bringing up of those animals committed to their care, wherein the son succeeds the father. To these beasts every citizen pays his vows, whereby they pay their homage to that God, to whom the beast is consecrated: εὐχόμενοι τῷ θεῷ τοῦ ἀν' ἧ τὸ θηρίον.* Which last words prove, that they did not worship the beast as a God, but as a figure representing that God to whom it belonged. To the same purpose *Plutarch* says †, they hold *Apis* to be the lively image of *Osiris*.

Tho' we live at a vast distance of time, after that *Egyptian* idolatry was overthrown, yet I find a late, and he seems to be an ingenuous learned traveller, *Monf. Lucas* ‡, in the relation he gives of his travels in *Egypt*, presents us with the picture of the images of those beasts, which were the objects of their idolatry; as the *Apis*, the *Crocodile*, and others, as he saw the same engraven on stone at the doors, and several interior places of the great labyrinth, called the palace of *Charon*, at the south extremity of the lake *Mæris*. Hence he conceives that labyrinth to have been a sort of *Pantheon*, in honour of all the divinities of *Egypt*, and especially dedicated to the Sun. If so, that vast labyrinth is a lasting monument of that monstrous idolatry.

M 3

After

* Lib. 2. cap. 65. pag. m. 114.

† Of *Isis* and *Osiris*.

‡ Voyage du Sieur Paul Lucas, tom. 2. pag. 42. printed 1720.

After all that has been said of the signification of this worship, which the *Egyptians* gave to beasts, I conceive the truest meaning that can be given of it, is that of the Apostle *Paul*, speaking concerning the Gentiles ||; *When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.— For this cause, God gave them up unto vile affections.*

The whole story of *Isis* and *Osiris*, as delivered by *Plutarch*, is very prolix, and full of extravagant imaginations and monstrous fictions; in comparison of which, the *Metamorphoses* and Fables of the *Greek* and *Latin* poets may pass for rational and well contrived. *Plutarch* conceives, that by *Osiris*, the Sun is to be understood, for these reasons: (1.) The images of *Osiris* do carry a resplendent lustre, to represent the beams and light of the Sun. (2.) In the hymns composed in the praise of *Osiris*, they address themselves to him, who rests in the bosom of the Sun. (3.) After the autumnal equinox, they celebrate a certain feast, all in mourning, called ἀφανισμὸς *Osiridis*, the disappearance of *Osiris*, signifying the removal of the Sun at a greater distance in winter. (4.) About the winter solstice, they enquire after *Osiris*, and cause a cow to take seven rounds about his temple, to intimate that in seven revolutions of the Moon, the Sun will return to the summer solstice. (5.) Every day they offer incense and sweet odours to the Sun: At his rising, they present rosin; at noon myrrh; and at sun-setting, a composition called *Kiphi*. *Macrobius*, who finds the Sun almost in every thing, gives other reasons to prove that the Sun is signified by *Osiris* *. *Diodorus Siculus* says †, *Osiris*, in the *Egyptian* language, signifies πολυοφθαλμὸς, many eyed. The Emperor *Julian*, who endeavoured to restore *Paganism*, when, by the light of the Gospel, it was almost banished out of the world, makes

|| Rom. i. 21—26.

† Bibl. Hist. lib. i.

* Saturnalia, lib. i. pag. m. 367.

makes the Sun the great God, and the parent of all men. He says the Sun and Man begets man ‡, ἀνθρωπος ἀνθρω-
πον γεννᾷ καὶ ἥλιος.

If we look further into the chaos of *Egyptian Idolatry*, we may find some tracks of *Noah*. The word *Apis* signifying *my father*, suits exactly with *Noah*, the father of the fathers of the world after the flood. *Noah* cultivated the ground; nothing could be more properly consecrated to him, than an ox, the chief instrument of agriculture. In *Plutarch's* story of *Isis* and *Osiris*, 'tis said, that after the privy parts of *Osiris* could not be recovered, they were forced to make others of plaister-work. This has a relation to the history of *Cham*, who looked on his father's nakedness while he was drunk and asleep. The *Rabbins* add, that he intended to make him incapable of procreation. The learned Dr. *Cumberland*, bishop of *Peterborough*, finds also some foot-steps here of *Misraim* the son of *Cham*, grandchild of *Noah*, the first king of *Egypt*, and founder of their monarchy. In the very preface to the Ten Commandments, *Egypt* is called by the name of *Misraim* in the *Hebrew* *. And long before that, even at the burial of *Jacob*, the mourning of the *Egyptians* was by the *Canaanites* called *Abel Misraim* †. He conceives that *Osiris* is only an appropriated title of honour, signifying *the Prince*, and *Isis* is *Ishab* his wife ‖. Other parts of the fable were devised long afterward.

We may also find here some hints of *Moses*, tho' disguised under a heap of rubbish, especially under the story of *Typhon*, the great enemy of the *Egyptian* deities. *Huetius* finds all the fables of the heathen, and of their Gods, to signify *Moses*: but he is not out of the way, when he finds him here **. For (1.) *Typhon*, according to *Plutarch* ‖, was of a ruddy colour; *Moses* was exceeding fair. A fair complexion, next approaching to red, was a great rarity in *Egypt*, and in great esteem there, as well as over all *Africa*. (2.) The word *Typhon* signifies inundation, in the *Hebrew* and *Phenician* languages. They

M 4

be-

‡ Oratio in regem Solem. Opera Juliani, pag. 131.

* Exod. xx. 2. † Gen. l. 11. ‖ Phenician History, pag. 45, 98.

** Demon. Evang. pag. m. 87. Edit. 1690. ‖ Of Isis and Osiris.

bestowed this odious name upon *Moses*, because by his means *Pharaoh* and his host were swallowed up by the sea. The priests, says *Plutarch*, abominate the sea, and call salt the scum of *Typhon*. 'Tis one of those things that are forbidden at table. They do not salute any pilots or seamen. They have such an abomination for fish, that when in their hieroglyphics they intend to represent a detestable thing, they do it by the figure of a fish. He says also, When the river *Phædrus* turned the wind somewhat roughly, about the dawning of the day, *Isis* was so much displeased and angry, that she dried it quite *. (3.) *Typhon* was esteemed to be a great enemy to their Gods, who engaged in so cruel a war against them, that they were obliged to shelter themselves in the bodies of beasts †, one in an ox, another in a sheep, &c. This seems to have a relation to what God did in *Egypt*, where he exercised judgments upon all their Gods ‡. He smote even their sacred animals. (4.) *Typhon*, with the assistance of 72 of his associates, plotted against *Osiris*. *Moses* brought the people out of *Egypt*, and conducted them thro' the wilderness, by the assistance of 70 elders, whom he elected as his partners in the government. (5.) *Typhon* was the brother of *Osiris* king of *Egypt*. *Moses* being reputed the son of *Pharaoh's* daughter, was consequently the supposed brother of that prince. (6.) The fable says, *Typhon* was aided and in confederacy with the queen of *Ethiopia*: *Plutarch* calls her name *Ayso* ||. *Zippora*, *Moses's* wife, was an *Ethiopian* woman. (7.) *Typhon* came into *Egypt* upon an ass, to fight *Isis* and *Osiris*; therefore the *Egyptians* abominate this creature, and give the name of an ass to the king of *Persia*, who killed their *Apis*. *Moses* having received his commission from God to oblige *Pharaoh* to suffer the *Israelites* to leave his territories, took his wife and his sons, and set them upon an ass, and returned to the land of *Egypt* **. Finally, it is remarkable

* Of *Isis* and *Osiris*, *Morals*. pag. m. 1294.

† *Plutarch* of *Isis* and *Osiris*. *Apollodori Bibliotheca*, pag. m. 257.

‡ *Exod.* xii. 12. *Numb.* xxxiii. 4.

|| Of *Isis* and *Osiris*. *Morals*, pag. 1292.

** *Exod.* iv. 20.

able which *Plutarch* observes *, *That Typhon having lost the field, fled six days journey upon an ass's back; having by this means escaped, he begat two sons, Hierosolymus and Judæus: 'tis evident, says he, that those who relate this would draw the history of the Jews into the fable.*

Before I leave this subject, allow me to observe, that *Plutarch* in his treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris*, has several footsteps of divine truths, tho' they be larded with fables. For example, he says †, *Of this opinion, says he, I assure you I am, that the beatitude and felicity of eternal life, which Jupiter enjoys, consists in that he is ignorant of nothing that's done, and also that immortality, if spoiled of the knowledge of things that be, and are done, is not life, but bare time. In the city of Sais, the image of Minerva, which they take to be Isis, had such an inscription over it as this, I am all that which is, has been, and shall be, and never any man yet was able to draw open my veil ‡. He frequently condemns the Egyptian idolatry. In so doing, says he, they imprint absurd and blasphemous opinions of the Gods, tending to atheism and impiety, attributing the names of Gods unto natures, and things senseless, lifeless, and corruptible ||: for we must never think that these things be Gods; for nothing can be a God, which has no soul, and is subject to man.——In another place he says, But the Egyptians, at least the common sort of them, worshipping and honouring these very beasts, as if they were Gods, have not only exposed their divine service to ridicule, but there has also crept in an opinion, which has so far possessed the weaker sort as it brings them to meer superstition; and as for those of a better capacity, these it drives headlong into beastly thoughts, and atheistical discourses **. This and more to the same purpose hath this learned moral philosopher. Nor do I think it strange: he wrote in the time of the Emperor *Trajan*, when Christianity had obtained some footing in the world. And tho' *Plutarch* was a heathen,*

I

* *Plutarch. ubi supra, pag. 1300.*

N.B. I use frequently the Translation of *Dr. Holland*, printed 1603, which tho' old, yet, in my opinion, in some places expresses the Author's Sense as well as latter Translations. † *Plut. ubi sup. pag. 1288.*

‡ *Plutarch. ubi supra, pag. 1291.*

|| *Ibid. pag. 1313.*

** *Of Isis and Osiris, in his Morals, pag. m. 1315.*

I know not but he might have read some part of the sacred Scriptures, which long before his time were translated into *Greek*; and the world then began to be ashamed of some of the absurd and foolish heathen superstitions. So far of the *Egyptian* idolatry, in imitation whereof *Aaron* made the Golden Calf in the wilderness, and *Jero-boam* those in *Dan* and *Bethel*, and set them up there as the Gods, who had brought them out of the land of *Egypt*.

The feast of the dedication of the Golden Calf is the last thing which I remark concerning it. *Moses* records, *That when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it, and made proclamation, and said, to-morrow is a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play**. 'Tis highly probable, that at this feast they sacrificed after the manner of the *Egyptians*. *Herodote* gives an account of a solemn feast, which the people of *Egypt* celebrated at a place called *Bubastis*†, in honour of the Goddess *Diana*. “To her, he says, they offer many sacrifices, “and while the victim is a burning, they dance, and play “a hundred tricks, and drink more wine than in the whole “year beside: for there convene thither about 700000 “men and women, besides children.” In another feast of theirs to the Goddess *Isis*, they used such impure rites, as he did not think lawful to be named. *Aaron's* feast of the Golden Calf, seems to have been in imitation of this. To the same feast and customs then used, the words of *Amos* may have a relation‡, *ye have born the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images: it being a custom among the heathen to carry their idols in pomp at their publick feasts, under portable tabernacles, such as even in later times they called at Rome Thensæ, Vehicula Deorum, shrines for their Gods. Herodote* says ||, “They placed a wooden image in a little wooden temple all gilt over, and this was carried to other sacred “places;

* *Exod.* xxxii. 5, 6. † In *Euterpe*, i. e. lib. 2. cap. 59——62. & cap. 137.

‡ *Amos* v. 26. || *Herod.* lib. 2. cap. 63. pag. m. 113.

“ places; a few of those who are chosen to minister to
 “ the image, drawing a chariot that runs upon four
 “ wheels, with the image within it.”

I proceed next to the *Phenician Idolatry*. The *Phenicians* were among the most ancient nations, and first idolaters. I have spoken concerning their antiquities already*. The only account we have of their theology is by a little fragment preserved by *Eusebius* †, of the translation that *Philo Biblius*, in the reign of the Emperor *Hadrian*, made of *Sanckoniathon*. Some weighty objections against the authority of this fragment that Mr. *Dodwell* advances, I have not yet seen answered. But whatever be of its authority, I do not see that the first author thereof can be older than about the reign of *Solomon*; for he dedicates his book to *Abibalus*, who we find in *Josephus* ‡ was the father of *Hiram*, contemporary with *Solomon*. But take the fragment as it is, we have there his cosmogony and genealogy. His cosmogony begins thus; “ The principle of the universe is a dark and windy air, or a wind
 “ made of dark air, and a turbulent evening chaos.
 “ These things were boundless, and for a long time had
 “ no bound nor figure: but when this wind fell in love
 “ with his own principles, and a mixture was made, that
 “ mixture was called *Desire*, or *Cupid*. This mixture
 “ completed, was the beginning of the making of all
 “ things: but that wind did not know its own production;
 “ and of this wind was begotten *Mot*, which some call
 “ *Mud*, others the putrifaction of a watery mixture;
 “ and of this came all the seed of this building, and the
 “ generation of the universe: but there were certain
 “ animals which had no sense, out of which were begot-
 “ ten intelligent animals, and were called *Zophesemin*,
 “ that is, the spies or contemplators of heaven, and
 “ were formed alike in the shape of an egg. Thus
 “ shone out of *Mot* the sun, and the moon, the less and
 “ the greater stars.” Such, says *Eusebius*, is the *Phenician generation of the world, which banishes divinity, and introduces*

* See pag. 100, &c.

† De præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 9, 10.

‡ Contra Appionem, lib. 1.

introduces atheism. Those who desire to know the rest of it, may read *Eusebius* *, and the authors quoted at the foot of the page †, who have handled this subject more fully. For my part, I see nothing in it, but some scraps stolen out of the *Mosaick* history of the creation, blended with such a heap of fables, as one can scarce understand them. *Santhoniaton* says, “ These things are writ in
 “ the cosmogony of *Taautus*, and in his memoirs, and
 “ out of the conjectures, and supernatural signs, which
 “ his mind saw, and wherewith he has enlightned us.” Now, ’tis probable, that this *Taautus* is *Moses*, of whom they might have some knowledge in *Phenicia*, a country so near *Judæa*; and that *Moses* also is the *Thoth* of the *Egyptians*, and the *Mercurius Trismegistus* of the *Greeks*. It appears by the account we have in *Santhoniaton*, that he never so much as mentions God, so far as to name him in making of the world: and therefore, as *Eusebius* observes, this banishes divinity, and promotes atheism. If he did read the *Mosaical* books, ’tis plain he believed them not; he has missed the foundation of all true natural religion, which is love and obedience to God, as the author and supporter of our Being.

I come now to take some notice of *Santhoniaton*’s history and genealogy, where he speaks thus: “ Of the
 “ wind *Colpias* and his wife *Baau*, whom the *Greeks* call
 “ *Night*, were begot two mortals, called *Protogonus* and
 “ *Æon*; and *Æon* found out the way of taking food
 “ from trees. Those begotten by them were called *Ge-*
 “ *nus* and *Genea*, and dwelt in *Phenicia*; but when great
 “ drougths came, they stretched their hands up to hea-
 “ ven towards the sun; for him, says he, they thought
 “ the only Lord of heaven, calling him *Beelsamin*.——
 “ Afterwards from *Genus*, the son of *Protogonus* and
 “ *Æon*, other mortals were begotten, whose names
 “ were *Light*, *Fire* and *Flame*. These found out the way of
 “ generating fire, by rubbing of pieces of wood against
 “ each other, and taught men the use thereof. These
 “ begat

* *Loco modò citato.*

† *Jurieu Histoire des Dogmes & des Cultes*, from pag. 430 to 447, of French Copy. *Dr. Cumberland’s Phenician History* from the Beginning and forward.

“ begat sons of vast bulk and height, whose names were
 “ given to mountains on which they first seized ; so
 “ from them were named mount *Cassius*, *Libanus*, *Anti-*
 “ *libanus*, and *Brathys*.” I need not transcribe the re-
 mainder of this obscure narrative ; such who are curious
 may read it in *Eusebius* and Dr. *Cumberland’s Phenician*
history. I shall only observe, that this learned prelate finds
 in it ten generations, which are those in the line of *Cain*,
 contemporary with the ten generations in the line of *Seth*,
 recorded in the 5th Chap. of *Genesis*, viz. in *Sancho-*
niathon thus, 1. *Protogonus*, whom he makes *Adam*. 2. *Ge-*
nus, to be *Cain*. 3. *Lux*. 4. *Cassius*. 5. *Memrumos*.
 6. *Agreus*. 7. *Crusor*. 8. *Technites*. 9. *Agros*. 10. *Amnos*.
 The flood ends this line. Then *Sydyc*, *Cabeirci*, and the sons
 of *Dioscurus*. With these this learned bishop of *Peter-*
borough connects *Eratosthenes’s* table of 38 kings in upper
Egypt, beginning with *Menes* or *Misraim*, and ending
 with *Amurrahæus*. By this means we have a series of pro-
 fane history from the first man *Adam* to the first olym-
 piad, without any disagreement from the sacred Scripture.
 This is a better method of accounting for the long *Egypt-*
ian Dynasties, than what others have fallen upon to set
 them in opposition to sacred chronology. *Eratosthenes*,
 whose series of the *Egyptian* kings is preserved to us, was
 the most learned man in his time. He was a native of
Cyrene, bordering upon *Egypt*, *Librarian* to *Ptolemæus*
Euergetes. He had greater opportunities and helps for
 searching the *Egyptian* records than any person. The
 priests of *Egypt* had ever been in a combination to relate
 extravagant and incredible accounts of their kings, to
 magnify their antiquity, and aggrandize their monarchy.
Eratosthenes went thither with a desire to find out the
 truth. The names of the 38 first kings of *Egypt* which
 he sets down, are a succession for the space of 1055 years,
 and is the most probable account of their monarchy we
 have upon record, or can now expect when their history
 is gone, and cannot be recovered.

We have in the same fragment of *Sancho-*
niathon, some hints of the origin of idolatry, in his fifth generation of
Memrumos and *Hypsuranus*. ’Tis said, “ He consecra-
 “ ted

“ ted two *στήλαι*, ruder stones, or pillars, to fire and
 “ wind, and he bowed down to, or worshipped them,
 “ and poured out to them the blood of such wild beasts
 “ as had been caught in hunting. But when these were
 “ dead, such as remained, consecrated to them stumps of
 “ wood, and stones, worshipping them, and kept anni-
 “ versary feasts to them.” This, according to Dr. Cum-
 berland’s method of explaining the fragment, was before
 the flood. Afterwards *Sanchoiathon* adds, “ More-
 “ over the God *Ouranus* devised *Betulia*, contriving
 “ stones that moved as having life. But *Cronus* begat
 “ on *Astarte* seven daughters, called *Titanides* or *Arte-*
 “ *medes*; and he begat on *Rhea* seven sons, the youngest
 “ of which, as soon as he was born, was consecrated a
 “ God. Also by *Dione* he had daughters, and by *Astarte*
 “ moreover two sons, *Pothos* and *Eros*, i. e. *Cupid* and
 “ *Love*. But *Dagon*, after he had found out bread-corn,
 “ and the plough, was called *Ζεὺς Arotrius*, i. e. *Jupiter*
 “ the plougher.” Dr. *Cumberland* by long reasoning
 proves, that *Cronus* was *Cham* the son of *Noah* *. If it
 be so, this idolatry was soon after the flood: but ’tis dif-
 ficult to be peremptory, since *Philo Biblius*, who transla-
 ted *Sanchoiathon*, has committed many mistakes, and
 given the *Phenician* names of the Gods, with which the
Greeks were unacquainted, in terms more obvious to
 them. The *Titanides*, *Astarte*, *Rhea*, *Zeus* or *Jupiter*,
 were terms not known in the *Phenician* tongue. In the last
 place I remark in this fragment, *Sanchoiathon* says †,
That Taautus ascribed a divinity to the nature of the dragon
and the serpents, which opinion of his was approved by the
Phenicians and Egyptians, because these creatures abound
with spirits beyond all reptiles, are of a fiery nature, and
have a variety of curious crooked motions, and are called by
the Phenicians, a good Demon, and by the Egyptians,
Cneph.

3

I proceed now to consider other kinds of idolatry, espe-
 cially those mentioned in sacred Scripture, which were
 abhorred

* *Phenician History*, pag. 112, & seqq.

† *Apud Euseb. de Præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 9, 10. pag. m. 41.*

abhorred of the Lord, and the practice of them forbidden to his people. We find then *Israel* in the wilderness joined themselves to *Baal-Peor*, a God of the *Moabites* and *Midianites*. Thus we read in the book of *Numbers**, *Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their Gods. And the people did eat, and bow down to their Gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor: And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.* This idol, which is called by the *Septuagint*, *Beel-Phegor*, is mentioned in several other texts of Scripture†. To come to understand what this God of the *Moabites* was, we may lay down this principle, that all the Deities of the *Greeks* and *Romans* came from the east, but under different names. Now 'tis a constant tradition among the ancient and modern *Hebrews*, that this idol was an obscene Deity, which may plead excuse for not translating some passages concerning it. This opinion of the *Jews* may be founded upon *Hosea* ix. 10. *They went unto Baal-Peor, and separated themselves to their shame; and other texts in Numbers already quoted.* 'Tis the opinion of *Jerom*, who had it from the tradition of the ancient *Jews*, that *Beel-Phegor* is the *Priapus* of the *Greeks* and *Romans*. “ The *Israelites*, says he, being brought out of *Egypt*, did commit fornication with the *Midianites*, and went to *Beel-Phegor*, an idol of the *Moabites*, which we may call *Priapus*. *Denique interpretatur Beel-Phegor idolum tentiginem habens in ore, id est, in summitate pellem, ut turpitudinem membri virilis ostenderet.* And because they went unto *Beel-Phegor*, they were alienated from God, to their own confusion‡.” The same father has a remarkable passage on the same subject, in his notes on *Hosea* iv. 14. *I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery*||. He says, “ The *Hebrew*, *Kedesboth*, which *Aquila* renders ἐνπλασμένων, *Symmachus*, ἑταιριδων “ whores,

* Numb. xxv. 1, 2, 3.

† Hosea ix. 10. Psal. cvi. 28. Numb. xxxi. 15, 16.

‡ Hieronymus in Hoseam, cap. ix. ver. 10. operum Tom. 6. fol. 16.

|| Hieronymus in Hoseam, cap. ix. ver. 10. operum Tom. 1. fol. 8.

“ *whores*,——we render *effeminate*, that we may make
 “ the sense of the word plain to people of our language.
 “ These are they who are called *Galli*, not servants to
 “ the mother of Gods, but of devils, who being gelded
 “ in honour of *Atys*, whom the whorish deity made an
 “ eunuch, the *Romans* have made their priests so. These
 “ *Galli* were emasculated, to reproach those who took
 “ the city of *Rome*. Such kind of idolatry was in *Israel*,
 “ especially among the women, who worshipped *Beel-*
 “ *Phegor*, for the greatness of his obscenity, which we
 “ may call *Priapus*. Hence king *Asha* took away the
 “ high-places, and this sort of priests, and removed his
 “ mother *Maachab* from being queen, and took away
 “ the *Sodomites*, or effeminate, out of the land, and all
 “ the idols that his father had made*. And also he re-
 “ moved his mother, that she might not be priestesses in
 “ the sacrifices of *Priapus*. He cut down the grove she
 “ had consecrated, and broke her abominable idol, and
 “ burnt it at the brook *Kedron*: but the high-places
 “ were not taken away.——We must know, *continues*
 “ *he*, that *Kedeshoth*, *whores*, is the same with *ιερείς*,
 “ *priests*, consecrated to *Priapus*; and in other places,
 “ *Kedeshim* signifies these *emasculated men*: *Esaia*s saying,
 “ *καὶ ἐμπαῖκται κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν*, *Their deceivers*
 “ *shall have rule over them*; in the *Hebrew* it is *Kedeshim*,
 “ and we translate it, *Their effeminate persons shall have rule*
 “ *over them*.” These passages of *Jerom* are very plain;
 and if we look to the vulgar *Latin*, we shall find these
 texts, 1 *King*. xv. 13. 2 *Chron*. xv. 16. thus rendred, as
 far as I can english them; *Also he removed Maachah his*
mother, that she might be no longer high-priestess in the
sacrifices of Priapus; and he destroyed the grove she had
consecrated, and broke the most filthy idol, and burnt it at
the brook Kedron.——*He deposed his mother Maachah*
from the Empire, because she had made in a grove the image
of Priapus, which he broke in pieces, and burnt it at the
brook Kedron. I know *Mr. Selden* is of another opinion,
 that *Baal-Peor* is named from the hill *Peor*, where that
 idol

* 1 *Kings* xv. 12, 13. 2 *Chron*. xv. 16.

idol was worshipped *. But, as Dr. Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough, observes †, “ The true import of the word *Peor*, or *Baal-Peor*, in the Hebrew, is, *he that shews boastingly or publickly his nakedness*; that’s void of all modesty, and so a friend to debauchees: That Origen, Jerom and Philo Judæus, are all of the same opinion; and shews from Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus, that the images of *Osiris* in Egypt, of the goat at Mendez, of the bull *Apis*, and of *Pan* or *Faunus*, the *Sileni* and the *Satyrs*, had the same representations of turpitude.” Which should make all persons, who have the least grain of modesty, abhor that abominable idolatry and filthy heathenish superstition, where these things were recommended by the very precepts of their religion, and the patterns of their deities.

Concluding then that *Baal-Peor*, the God of the *Moa-bites*, is the same with *Priapus*, ’tis probable that under these names the heathens represented the Patriarch *Noah*, of whom they might have some dark notices by tradition. The resemblance is evident: For first, *Baal-Peor* signifies a naked master or God; which agrees with *Noah*, who was the father, the master and king of mankind, after the flood, and who being drunk with wine, lay uncovered before his children. ’Tis well known the heathens bestowed monstrous naked parts on *Priapus*‡. This was to represent the generative virtue of *Noah*, the father of all men. *Orpheus*, in a hymn made in honour of *Priapus*, called him *πρωτογονος*, and *Noah* was doubtless the first man of the second world. *Priapus* was looked on as the source of fruitfulness. Women to avoid being barren, sat upon his filthy image: for which lascivious behaviour toward their God *Mutinus*, or *Priapus*, who are the same, *Lactantius*|| and *Augustine*** justly deride the heathen. 2dly, *Noah* was a husband-man, a gardener and planter of vineyards. All this agrees with *Priapus*, who is called by *Tibullus*, *Deus Agricola*. 3dly, *Priapus* was

repre-

* De Diis Syris, pag. m. 163.

† Phenician Hist. pag. 67, 69, 73.

‡ Horat. lib. 1. Satyr. 8. *Obscænoque ruber porrectus ab inguine palus*.

|| De falsa Religione, lib. 1. cap. 20. ** De Civitate Dei, lib. 1. cap. 9.

represented with a bosom full of all sorts of fruits, and a horn of plenty *. Who but *Noah* with his skill in husbandry, began to render the earth fruitful?

Kemosh the God of the *Moabites*, is the same with *Baal-Peor* under another name, as *Jerom* conceives †: “*In Nabo* was the idol *Chemosh* consecrated, which by another name is called *Beel-Phegor*.” This idol of the *Moabites* is frequently called in sacred Scripture *Chemosh* or *Kemosh*. Then did *Solomon* build an high-place for *Kemosh* the abomination of *Moab* ‡. The king *Josiah* defiled the high-place which *Solomon* had built for *Chemosh* the abomination of the *Moabites* ||. *Jeremiah* foretelling *Moab*’s destruction, says, *Chemosh* shall go into captivity, with her priests and princes, and *Moab* shall be ashamed of *Chemosh* **. *Nebo* was another idol of the *Moabites*, which some authors also take to be the same with *Baal-Peor*. *Bel* boweth down, *Nebo* stoopeth: *Moab* shall bow over *Nebo*, and over *Medeba* ††.

The *Ammonites* were brethren of the *Moabites*, both were the children of *Lot*, the offspring of the incestuous copulation with his daughters. The children of *Israel* were polluted with their idolatry; I shall therefore now discourse thereof. The worship given to *Molech*, *Moloch*, or *Milchom*, the idol of the *Ammonites*, is frequently mentioned and condemned in Scripture. The law of *Moses* forbids it. *Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech. Whosoever he be, of the children of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourns in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech, shall be surely put to death* ††. *Solomon* went after *Ashtoreth*, the Goddess of the *Zidonians*, and after *Milcom* the abomination of the *Ammonites*. He built an high-place for *Chemosh* the abomination of *Moab*, and for *Molech* the abomination of the children of *Ammon*, 1 Kin. xi. 5—7. Josiah

* Virg. Eclog 7. Ver. 33.

Sinum lactis & hacte liba, Priape, quotannis, &c.

† In Isa. cap. 15. ‡ 1 Kings xi. 7. || 2 Kings xxiii. 13.

** Jer. xlviii. 7—13. †† Isaiah xlv. 1. Isa. xv. 2.

†† Levit. xviii. 21. and xx. 2.

Josiah defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech, 2 King. xxiii. 10. The prophet Jeremiah says, They have built the high-places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not.——Therefore behold the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter *. The same prophet foretels in the name of the Lord, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burnt incense in it unto other Gods.——And have filled this place with the blood of innocents; they have built also the high-places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal †. Achaz burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathens ‡. There is another text concerning this kind of idolatry ||, You have born the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun, your images, the star of your God, which ye made to yourselves. This is cited by Stephen at his martyrdom **, where he calls it the star of your God Remphan. I have spoke of this place before ††, to which I now only add, that Dr. Cumberland conceives ‡‡, that Chiun and Raiphas or Remphas, are the names that belong to Cronus, or Cham, who in a few ages after the flood was worshipped by the heathen world. Upon the whole, from all these texts it appears, that the Ammonites had an idol called sometimes Molech, Meloch, or Milcom, and even Baal; which last, is a common name to all the idols of the Syrians: that the worship of this idol consisted in making their children to pass through the fire to sacrifice, and burn them in his presence: that the Israelites were polluted with this abomination, and had a place for it in a valley near Jerusalem, called the valley of the son of Hinnom, or Tophet: and that the

N 2

good

* Jer. vii. 31, 32. † Jer. xix. 3, 4, 5. ‡ 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.
 || Amos v. 26. ** Acts vii. 43. †† See Page 179.
 ‡‡ Phenician History, page 122.

good king *Josiah* destroyed that idol, and made the place a valley of slaughter, for burying carcases, which was according to the prophecy of the man of God, 1 *King*. xiii. 1, 2.

A more particular description of this idol we have from *Rabbi Simeon* in his comment on the whole bible, entitled, *A Purse*: He upon *Jer*. vii. says*, “ All the houses of
“ idols were in the city of *Jerusalem*, except that of
“ *Molech*, which was out of the city in a separate place.
“ Then he asks, how was this idol made? *Ans*. It was
“ a statue with an head of an ox, and the hands stretched
“ out as a man’s, who opens his hand to receive some-
“ thing from another. It was hollow within, and there
“ were seven chapels raised, before which the idol was
“ erected. He that offered a fowl or a young pigeon,
“ went into the first chapel; if he offered a sheep or a
“ lamb, he went into the second; if a ram, into the
“ third; if a calf, into the fourth; if a bullock, into
“ the fifth; if an ox, into the sixth; but he only who
“ offered his own son went into the seventh chapel, and
“ kissed the idol *Molech*, as’tis written, *Hos*. xiii. 2. *Let*
“ *the men that sacrifice kiss the calves*. The child was
“ placed before the idol, and a fire made under it, till it
“ became red-hot. Then the priest took the child and
“ put him into the glowing hands of *Molech*; and lest
“ the parents should hear his cries, they beat drums to
“ drown the noise. Therefore the place was called *To-*
“ *phet*, from *Thoph*, *Thuppin*, that signifies *drums*. It
“ was also called *Hinnom*, because of the childrens roar-
“ ing, from the *Hebrew* word *Naham*, to roar, or be-
“ cause the priests of *Molech* said to the parents, *Jebene*
“ *lab*, it will be of advantage to you.” *Rabbi Behai*, on
Levit. xviii. 21. says, *The benefit resulting from the sa-*
crifice, was the preservation of their other children, and
that their own lives should be happy; at least the priests
told them so. Some conceive *Hinnom*, the name of the
place, is derived from some private person to whom the
ground formerly belonged. The rest of *Rabbi Simeon*’s
commentary is probable, and consonant to texts already
cited,

* Apud Jurieu Hist. des dogmes & des cultes, pag. 566.

cited, and to *Psal.* cvi. 37. *They sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils.*

The same idol was worshipped by the *Greeks* and *Romans*, under the name of *Saturn*, and by the *Gauls* and *Germans* under that of *Teutates*. We have convincing testimonies, that these and other *Gentiles* offered human sacrifices, which I shall a little insist upon to illustrate the abominations of heathenism, and to shew how great a mercy we enjoy, in being delivered from them by the light of the Gospel. *Varro*, cited by *Macrobius*, informs us, “ That the *Pelasgians* being scattered from their own country, and not knowing where to go, were by the oracle ordered to repair to *Italy*, where they erected a temple to *Pluto*, and an altar to *Saturn*, whose feast they called *Saturnalia*, and there for a long time they believed that they appeased *Pluto* by mens heads, and *Saturn* by human sacrifices, because of the oracle to which they trusted*. But *Hercules*, ’tis said, coming through *Italy*, some time after this, with *Geryon’s* cattle, persuaded their posterity to exchange these unlucky for more lucky sacrifices, to offer to *Pluto* images of a human shape, and lights unto *Saturn*, because φωτα signifies not only a man, but also light.” It appears from *Cicero*, that the *Gauls* retain’d this abominable custom; *Can any thing*, says he †, *be holy and religious to these people, who whenever they apprehend any danger, and think the Gods must be appeased, they pollute their temples and altars with human sacrifices? Any Religion they have, they defile with wickedness; for who is ignorant, that to this very day they retain the barbarous custom of sacrificing men, hominum immolandum?* *Lactantius* assures us ‖, That the *Gauls* appease *Hesus* and *Teutates* with the blood of men; and gives several other instances of such barbarity practised by the Heathens, particularly, “ That at *Salamis* in *Cyprus*, *Teucrus* offered a human victim, and ordered his posterity to do the like, which,

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“ says

* *Macrobii Saturnalia lib. 1. cap. 7. pag. m. 275, 276. Καὶ κεφαλὰς*

“*Ἀδὴ καὶ τῷ πατρὶ πέμπετε φωτα.*

† *Oratio pro M. Fontejo, operum pag. m. 383.*

‖ *De falsa Religione, lib. 1. pag. m. 86, 87.*

“ says he, was lately taken away by the Emperor *Hadrian*; that there was a law among the people of *Taurus* to sacrifice their guests to *Diana*, which was long observed— Neither are the *Latins* free of it, for *Jupiter Latialis* even to this day (that is, to our author’s time, the third century) is adored with human blood.” The same author says, “ That the *Carthaginians* offered human victims to *Saturn*; that when they were vanquished by *Agathocles* king of *Sicily*, they conceiving that their God was angry with them, to appease him the better, they sacrificed to him at once two hundred sons of noblemen ‡.” These are sacrifices to devils! *Plato* in his dialogue *Minos*, says, the *Carthaginians* sacrificed their children to *Saturn*. ’Tis probable that they learned this of the *Phenicians* and *Tyrians*, of whom *Carthage* was a colony.

The account *Plutarch* gives of these sacrifices of the *Carthaginians*, in his book of *Superstition**, is very conformable to what has been already said of the worship of *Molech*. He informs us, “ That those who had no issue of their own to make a victim of, bought poor people’s children, as we buy lambs, calves, or young kids in the market: At which sacrifice the mother that bare them in her womb, must stand by, without weeping or sighing for pity and compassion; for if she sighed or shed a tear, she must lose the price of her child, tho’ actually slain and sacrificed. Moreover, before and about the image or idol to which the sacrifice was made, the place resounded with the noise of flutes, hautboys, drums, and timbrels, that the pitiful cry of the poor infants might not be heard.” He adds, If any *Typhon*, or other such-like giant, having chased out the Gods, should usurp the empire of the world, what other sacrifices would they delight in, or what other offerings and service could they require at mens hands? *Amestris*, the wife of the great monarch *Xerxes*, buried alive in the ground twelve persons, and offered them for prolonging of her own life, unto *Pluto*, who, as *Plato* says, was named *Pluto*, *Dis*, *Hades*.” *Diodorus Siculus*

‡ Ibid, pag. 89.

* *Morals*, pag. m. 266.

Siculus also informs us of the horrid sacrifice made by the *Carthaginians* of two hundred noble children at once, to appease *Saturn* (+), and three hundred more who were obnoxious for crimes; and in the same place tells what the statue of *Saturn* was, “ That it was a brazen
 “ statue stretching its hands toward the ground, so as
 “ the child being laid upon it, fell into a gulph of hot
 “ fire.” What can be more like *Moloch* than this? *Ludovicus Vives* also reports, “ That in his time the *Spaniards* discovered an island in *America*, which they
 “ called *Carolina*, where they found great brazen statues, hollow within, with the hands joined and
 “ stretched, in which the children were placed, who
 “ were sacrificed to their idols, and cruelly burnt alive
 “ with a great fire under the brazen statue (||).” ’Tis not improbable that this way of worship spread itself from *Carthage* along the coast of *Afric*, and thence was afterward transmitted to the opposite shore of *America*. We shall hear more afterwards of these inhuman sacrifices in *Mexico* and *Peru*, when we come to the seventh chapter of this book. Wherever Satan reigns, he is a devouring lion. Mean time I shall add, that *Lucian* owns, that the *Scythians* sacrifice their guests *; and *Lucan* † and *Silius Italicus* || confess the same of them and the *Carthaginians*, as in the verses quoted at the bottom of this page. *Plutarch*, in his life of *Themistocles*, owns, that the *Greeks* or *Athenians*, before the battle at *Salamis*, sacrificed three young beautiful prisoners, array’d in gold and jewels, to *Bacchus*, surnamed *Orestes*, that is, *Cruel*; being directed to do so by the sooth-fayer. From this

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horrid

(+) *Bibl. Hist. lib. 20. cap. 14. pag. m. 1065.*

(||) *In notis ad Augustinum de civitate Dei, lib. 20. cap. 19.*

* *Luciani opera, tom. 1. pag. 212. & περὶ θυσιῶν, ibid. pag. 369.*

† *Lucani Pharsalia, lib. 1. ver. 444.*

*Et quibus immitis placatur sanguine diro
 Tentates, horrensque feris altaribus Hesus;
 Et Taranis Scythica non mitior ara Diana.*

|| *Silius Italicus, lib. 4. ver. 767.*

*Mos fuit in populis, quos condidit advena Dido,
 Poscere cade Deos veniam, ac flagrantibus aris
 (Infandum dictu!) parvos imponere natos.*

horrid custom of sacrificing children, rose the fable of the poets, of *Saturn's* devouring his own children, as *Diodorus Siculus* observes *.

I might produce many other testimonies from the primitive fathers, against the *Gentiles*, concerning this barbarous custom; but I shall only desire the reader, who inclines to be acquainted with these affairs, to look into *Eusebius* †, who, after he has lamented the sad condition of those barbarous times, when the devil, whom they worshipped, persuaded the father to sacrifice his beloved son, the mother her pretty little daughter, he produces from the books of *Porphyry*, a sworn enemy to Christianity, many pregnant examples of these cruel sacrifices; as, that the *Rhodians*, on the 6th day of *July*, sacrificed a man to *Saturn*; that at the city of *Salamis* the like Sacrifice was performed in *March*, which custom *Diphilus* took away. The like barbarity was used at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, where they offered three men in one day; but *Amasis* their king substituted three images made of wax. This custom also prevailed in the isles of *Chios* and *Tenedos*; the sacrifice being there performed to *Bacchus Ombdus*, and at *Lacedæmon* to *Mars*. In *Phenicia* it was their ordinary practice, when war, famine, or any calamity raged, to offer human sacrifices, of which the history of *Sanchoniathon*, translated by *Philo-Biblius*, says our author, is full. But I am weary of these instances. Beside what I have above advanced, the curious may find plain documents of too too many of them in *Eusebius*, *l.c.* from authors which are now lost. What an invaluable mercy is it then, that the glorious Gospel has delivered us from this barbarous, monstrous inhumanity, and directed us to worship our gracious and merciful God, who made heaven and earth, and is reconciled to us by the death of his son? Who doth not command us to come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old; nor with thousands of rams, nor ten thousands of rivers of oil; nor to give our first-born for our transgression, the fruit of our body for the sin of our soul: but requires of thee,

* Loco supra citato.

† De Præp. Evang. lib. 4. cap. 5——18.

thee, O man, to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*.

One thing further I shall remark, as to that passage of *Eusebius*†, where, from *Philo-Biblius's* Translation of *Sanctioniathon*, he tells us, “ That those who were appointed to be sacrificed, were slain with mystical Ceremonies : for *Κρόνος* or *Saturn*, called *Israel* by the *Phenicians*, whom they consecrated and worshipped after his death, under the star of that name, reigning in these parts, had one son by a nymph called *Anobret*, whom he named *Jebud*, which signifies *only-begotten*; a dangerous war breaking out in that Country, he sacrificed that only son upon an altar made by himself.” It hath been asserted by the learned *Bochart* and others, that this story, tho’ disguised, relates to *Abraham's* designed sacrifice of *Isaac*. But *Dr. Cumberland* is of another opinion‡, that *Chronos* is *Cham* the son of *Noah*; that this passage cannot be applied to *Abraham* and *Isaac*, since the time and persons altogether differ. To be sure that action of *Abraham* can never be any cloak for these barbarous sacrifices; for *Abraham* had God’s express command, and was assured, that if *Isaac* had then died, he would have risen again, for the promise said, *That in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Heb. xi. 17—20. And God, to shew even at that time, that he calls no man to offer the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul, sent an angel from heaven, calling to *Abraham*, *Lay not thine hand upon the lad*. But *Dr. Cumberland* conceives this passage in *Eusebius* is to be applied to *Cham*, who had learned Idolatry from some of the old wicked world before the flood, and practised the same soon after it; and from him it was transmitted to *Canaan*, to *Egypt*, and to the rest of his dominions. If it be so, the origin of these barbarous customs is very ancient; but nothing the better, being plainly contrary to the very *Noachic* precepts, Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed*; most opposite to the law of nature, to the whole current of the sacred Scriptures, and a terrible instance of the

* Micah vi. 6—8. † De Præp. Evang. lib. 4. cap. 16. pag. m. 156.
‡ Phenician History, pag. 134, & seqq.

the degeneracy of men, when they go to that height of unnatural cruelty, as to *sacrifice their sons and their daughters to devils* *.

Adramelech and *Hanamelech*, the Gods of † *Sepharvaim*, are the same with *Molech*, to whom the *Sepharvaites* burnt their children in the fire. *Adar* and *Hana* are but additional surnames to *Molech*: *Adar* signifies *magnificent*, and *Hana*, *to hear*. Hence *Adramelech* is a magnificent and mighty king; *Hanamelech* a king that will hear such as call upon him. With such epithets the *Gentiles* profanely honoured their cruel idols.

I come now to consider the idolatry ascribed to *Baal*. Concerning it, I shall offer the following remarks. *First*, 'Tis frequently mentioned in the holy Scripture: *Balak took Balaam, and brought him up to the high places of Baal* ||. *Gideon* cast down the altar of *Baal*, and cut down the grove that was by it. The men of the city being displeased, threatened *Gideon* with death. But *Joash* his father said, *Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? — If he be a God, let him plead for himself*; and he called his son *Jerubbaal*, saying ‡, *let Baal plead against him*. In the History of *Abab*, we find he took to wife *Jezabel* the daughter of *Ethbaal* King of the *Zidonians*, and went and served *Baal*, and worshipped him; and reared up an altar for *Baal*, in the house of *Baal*, in *Samaria* **. We have also the admirable trial between *Elijah* and the prophets of *Baal*, to know who was the true God, who should answer by fire: the priests of *Baal*, to the number of 450, dressed the sacrifice, leapt on the altar, cried with a loud voice, *O Baal bear us, and cut themselves after their manner*; but there was no voice, nor any to answer. But God immediately answered *Elijah* by fire, whereupon the priests of *Baal* were put to death ††. The same prophet complains that among the ten Tribes, he only was left to be a witness against this idolatry: But the Lord tells him,

* Pſal. cvi. 37. 1 Cor. x. 20.

† 2 Kings xvii. 31.

|| Numb. xxii. 41.

‡ Judges vi. 25—32.

** 1 Kings xvi. 30—32.

†† 1 Kings xviii.

I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which has not kissed him *. *Jehu* destroyed the temple of *Baal* and his images, killed his priests, brake down his house, and made it a draught-house †. *Judah* was defiled with this kind of idolatry in the government of *Athaliah*; but *Joash*, by direction of *Jehoiada*, destroyed that idol ‖. In the reign of *Manasseh* it was restored: but good King *Josiah* put down them that burnt incense to *Baal*, to the sun, to the moon, to the planets, and to all the host of heaven ‡.

Secondly, I remark, that the Scripture has often *Baalim*, in the plural number, as *Judges* ii. 11. and iii. 7. *1 Sam.* xii. 10. and in other texts, which is an evidence, that there were many idol-deities so called.

Thirdly, *Baal*, by the Septuagint, is represented also as a Goddess, the word *Baal* being frequently constructed with a feminine article, as *1 Sam.* vii. 4. περιέλιον τὰς βααλίμ, *they destroyed the images of the Goddess Baal*, *Jer.* ii. 28. ἔθυσον τῇ βάαλ, *they sacrificed to the Goddess Baal*; and in other places, marked at the foot of the page **: Tho' 'tis to be observed, that in the *Hebrew* text *Baal* is always masculine. In the fragment of *Sanchoniathon*, preserved by *Eusebius*, we find mention is made of the Goddess *Baaltis* ††; Afterwards Saturn gave to the Goddess *Baaltis*, otherwise called *Diana*, the town of *Byblus*.

Fourthly, The name *Baal* which signifies *Lord*, *Master* or *Husband*, spread itself far and near. It seems to have its original from *Phenicia*, *Jezabel* the daughter of *Ethbaal* king of the *Zidonians*, coming into the house of *Ahab*, brought this idol with her from the city *Zidon*, where he was the chief God of *Tyre* and *Zidon*, and was well known all over *Asia*. 'Tis the same with *Bel* of the *Babylonians* often mentioned by the prophets in the Old-Testament ‡‡. The same name, and the same idol-deity

went

* *1 Kings* xix. 15—18 † *2 Kings* x. 25—28. ‖ *2 Kings* xi. 18.

‡ Compare *2 Kings* xxi. 3. with *2 Kings* xxiii. 4, 5.

** *Jer.* xi. 13. xix. 5. and xxxii. 35. *Hosea* ii. 8.

†† *De præp. Evang. lib.* 1. cap. 10. pag. m. 38. ad finem.

‡‡ *Isa.* xlvi. 1. *Jer.* l. 2. and li. 44.

went to the *Carthaginians*, who were a Colony of the *Phenicians*; as appears by the names of *Hannibal*, *Asdrubal*, *Adherbal*, and others of that kind, all consisting of or derived from *Bel* or *Baal*, being the name of the Deity of the country, which was according to the custom of the East, where the kings and great men of the realm had the name of their Gods. Thus *Daniel* in *Babylon* was called *Belteshazzar*, that is, the treasurer of the God *Bel*; *Hananiab* was called *Shadrach*, that is, a sweet *Dæmon*; and *Michael*, *Mesbach*, from the Goddess *Serab*; and *Azariab*, *Abednego*, or servant of *Nego*, another *Babylonish* deity. Other examples of this kind are given by *Jurieu**. It seems that the name of this idol was given to many towns and villages in *Canaan*, as *Baalab*, *Josh. xv. 9.* *Baal-Hermon*, *1 Chron. xv. 23.* *Baal-Gad*, *Josh. xi. 17.* *Baal-Meon*, *Numb. xxxii. 38.* *Baal-Pera-zim*, *2 Sam. v. 20.* *Baal-Schalisha*, *2 Kings iv. 42.* and *Baal-Tamar*, *Judge xx. 33.* But 'tis certain that most of these places had these names long before *Jezabel* made the idol-worship of *Baal* so universal among the ten tribes. This God also passed into *Gaul*, where he was known by the name of *Belenus*; their principal deities being *Teutates*, *Hesus*, *Taranis* and *Belenus*. He went also into *Italy* with the *Gauls*, who settled there. He was the God of *Aquileia*, till the fall of the empire. *Julius Capitolinus* says †, *That Maximinus, when besieging Aquileia, sent ambassadors persuading the people to surrender, to which they had almost consented; but Menophilus and his Colleague Crispinus opposed it, saying the God Belenus had promised by his Sooth-sayers, that Maximinus should be vanquished.* *Herodian* says ‡, *The natives of the country call this God Belis; they worship him with great devotion, and take him for Apollo.* *Gruterus* finds at *Aquileia* some ancient inscriptions, *Apollini Beleno*. 'Tis probable the *Roman* emperor called *Eliogabalus*, took his name, to signify that he was a priest of *Baal*.

Fifthly,

* *Hist. des Dogmes*, pag. 595.

† *In Maximinis inter Hist. Augustæ scriptores*, pag. m. 239.

‡ *Lib. 8. pag. m. 378.*

Fifthly, Let us consider how *Baal* was served. Passing the temples, altars, sacrifices, invocations and genuflexions to him, (these being common services to all the *Pagan* deities) there are some things peculiar to the honour of this idol. Children were sacrificed to him. The prophet *Jeremiah*, xix. 5. upbraids *Israel* for this; *They have built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it; neither came it into my mind.* This *Baal* is the same with *Molech* of the *Ammonites*, of whom I have before discoursed. The priests of *Baal* leaped upon his altar, 1 *Kings* xviii. This was usual in the service of the idols of the nations, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*, *Exod.* xxxii. 6. The priests of *Mars* and *Cybele* were called *Salii*, à *Saltando*, from dancing. The flute, trumpet, and other musical instruments, were used to lead and animate the dance, as we find in *Ovid* *. Another ceremony in the worship of *Baal* was, that the priests cut themselves with knives and launces, and covered themselves with their own blood. *Jeremiah* takes notice of this furious superstition, but speaks of it as a ceremony practised in mourning for the dead; *Men shall not lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them*, *Jer.* xvi. 6. This was forbidden by the law, *Ye shall not cut your selves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead*, *Deut.* xiv. 1. *Levit.* xix. 28. But the priests of *Baal*, when offering sacrifices, cut themselves after their manner with knives and launces, till the blood gushed out upon them, 1 *Kings* xviii. 28. and 'tis certain these bloody incisions were made to the heathen deities. Among the *Romans* both *Seneca* † and *Lucan* ‡ take notice of it. The last ceremony I observe in

* *Lib.* i. de *Ponto*, *Epist.* i. ver. 39.

Ante Deum matrem cornu tibi cen adunco

Cum canit; exigua quis stipis ara neget?

† *Seneca* in *Medea*, *Act.* 4. *Scen.* 2. ver. 808.

——— *Tibi nudato*

Pectore Manas sacro feriam

Brachia cultro.

‡ *Lucani Pharsalia*, lib. i. ver. 565.

——— *Tum, quos sectis Bellona lacertis*

Sava movet, cecinere Deos: crinemque rotantes

Sanguinei populis ulularunt tristia Galli.

in the worship of *Baal*, is kissing; Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him; 1 Kings xix. 18. 'Tis not worthy a debate whether they kissed the idol or their hand, to do homage to him; 'tis plain they used this as a posture of respect and adoration. These were the principal ceremonies used in the service of *Baal*, which were not so peculiar to him, as that they were not used to any other idol of the nations, but were done to shew their special regard to him, as one of their chief Deities.

In the *sixth* place, it may be remarked, that this *Baal* of the Syrians, Tyrians and Zidonians is the Ζεύς of the Greeks, and Jupiter of the Latins; by whom, according to Macrobius, is to be understood the Sun. Jupiter himself, says he*, does not exceed the nature of the sun.—He is carried in a winged chariot, to shew the swiftness of that star. In whatever sign he be, he goes before all the rest of the stars, leading and ordering all these deities. His image is of gold, the metal and colour of the sun. He is beardless, because the sun is ever young. He has a whip in his hand; for the sun is said to have a chariot and horses, and consequently a whip. In his left hand he holds a thunderbolt and sheaves; the first for Jupiter, and the last for the Sun. All which are arguments that they are one and the same deity. Macrobius, who finds the sun almost in every one of the heathen idols, could not miss him here. It were easy also to find out men concealed under the names of *Baal* and *Jupiter*. The bishop of Peterborough says†, Where Baal is set alone, and no circumstances determine it to another deity, I generally take Cronus to be understood; that is, according to his notion, Cham the son of Noah, who indeed was the great promoter of idolatry after the flood; and from him many nations in Canaan, Egypt and other parts did spring, who 'tis probable at these times did pay honour to him as to a deity. As to *Jupiter*, there are a vast number of deities of that name. Cicero says‡, Their divines number three of them, two
born

* Macrobi Saturnalia, lib. 1. cap. 23.

† Phenician History, pag. 152. ‡ De natura Deorum, lib. 3. §. 53.

born in Arcadia; one, whose father was Æther, who begat Proserpina and Liber; another begotten by Cælus the father of Minerva, the inventress of war; the third Jupiter was of Crete, the son of Saturn, and is buried in that island. Here I conceive are more than three: but Tertullian *, from Varro, reckons no less than 300 Jupiters; so does Lilius Geraldus †. Jupiter Hammon is as ancient as any of these. He was worshipped in Egypt and Lybia. His name seems to be derived from Ham the son of Noah, the father of idolatry.

Seventhly, There are several epithets given to Baal. Of Baal-Peor we have already discoursed. Baal-Zephon, Exod. xiv. 2, 9. was only the name of a place, or, in the opinion of some Jews, a magick figure, not a distinct Deity. Baal-Berith is mentioned in Judg. viii. 33. As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-Berith their God. The men of Shechem took seventy pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-Berith, with which Abimelech hired vain persons who followed him, Judg. ix. 4. Berith signifies the covenant or alliance; so Baal-Berith may be interpreted, The God of the covenant. Thus, among the Greeks and Romans, there was a Jupiter Fæderalis. Dr. Cumberland is of opinion ‡, that Baal-Berith doth signify Cronus or Cham, worshipped anciently at Berytis. Monsieur Jurieu conceives ||, that this deity is a Goddess of the Phenicians, since the Hebrew terminations *Itb* and *Uth* are always feminine, especially in proper names. 'Tis true this idol is called *Elohim-Baal* in the book of Judges, which are nouns of the masculine gender: but the reason is obvious, the Hebrews have no name that signifies a Goddess, because they own no sex in the deity. He is then of opinion that Baal-Berith is the same with the Goddess Cybele of the Greeks and Romans, the very Syrian Goddess of which Lucian writes, saying **, There was

* Apolog. cap. 14. operum pag. m. 31.

† Lilius Geraldus, Hist. Deorum synagmā 2. pag. m. 73.

‡ Phenician Hist. pag. 152. || Hist des Dogmes, &c. pag. 619.

** De Dea Syra, operum Tom. 2.

was nothing more magnificent than her temple. Beside the rich workmanship, and the vast offerings in it, there were some marks of a present deity. The statues were seen to sweat, move, and pronounce oracles. A noise was often heard there when the doors were shut. He tells also how amazing the concourse was of those who went to pay their devotions at her solemnities. He says, her statue is set in a chariot drawn by lions; she holds a drum in her hand, and her head is dressed with towers, as the Lydians paint her. Cybele may be known by all these tokens. To which we may add, that the priests of the Syrian Goddess were emasculated, and wore women's habit, having no other business than women's; that in her solemn feasts men, out of respect to her, seized with fury, at the sound of the drum, cut off their genitals, and ran naked over the town, holding the dismembered parts in their hand; and the first house into which they threw them, was to find them a woman's suit of clothes. This was done to the honour of the Goddess, who emasculated *Atys*. *Lucian* owns he heard a credible person say, that the temple of the Syrian Goddess was consecrated to *Rhea* or *Cybele* by *Atys*, who first taught men her mysteries; and that what the *Phrygians* or *Samothraccians* knew of them, came from a *Lydian*. After *Rhea* had made *Atys* an eunuch, he led a woman's life, took on a woman's habit, and in this condition rambled about the world, divulging her mysteries. When he came to *Syria*, perceiving the people beyond it would not receive him, he stopt there, and built a temple to the Goddess. *Cybele* is said by *Mythologists** to have been the wife of *Saturn*; she was called *Dindymene*, *Berycynthia*, and *Ops* by the *Latins*, and by the *Greeks*, *Rhea*. She was wont to ride in a chariot drawn by lions; her solemn festivals called *Megalesia*, were every fourth month, at which time the *Corybantes*, who were her priests, did act the part of madmen, with their drums, trumpets, and other instruments. The *Gauls*, who planted themselves in *Phrygia* on these days, moved so, as by degrees they became really mad, striking one another with swords and other weapons; yea, many times they grievously wounded

* See *Galtruchius's* Hist. of the Heathen Gods, pag. 8.

wounded themselves ; and at the end of this diversion they washed their bodies and wounds in some river dedicated to the Goddess. Monsieur *Jurieu* conceives *, That by this Goddess the heathens meant the earth and her generative virtue ; but for my part I love not to insist on meer conjectures. There are many things in this and other fables contrived by the devil, and delivered by the poets to reproach virtue, and to cause vice to reign with authority among men.

Dr. *Cumberland* † finds another idol in *Baalmeon*, mentioned *Numb.* xxxii. 38. *1 Chron.* v. 8. *Ezek.* xxv. 9. *Jer.* xlviii. 23. *Jos.* xiii. 17. where 'tis called *Beth-Baalmeon*, the house of *Baalmeon*, which he takes to be an idol for *Menes*, or *Misraim* the son of *Ham*, the first deified king of *Egypt*, the termination only being changed.

There is yet another *Baal*, mentioned both in the Old and New-Testament, I mean *Baalzebub*, or, as the Greeks spell it, *Beelzebul*. We find him named *2 Kings* i. 2, 3. *Ahaziah* fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in *Samaria*, and was sick ; and he sent messengers, saying, Go enquire of *Baalzebub*, the God of *Ekron*, whether I shall recover of this disease ? Which messengers being met by *Elijah*, he said to them, Is it not because there is not a God in *Israel* that ye go to enquire of *Baalzebub* the God of *Ekron* ? This is that *Baalzebub* so often named by the Evangelists, *Matth.* xii. 24. When the Pharisees heard it, they said, this fellow doth not cast out devils, but by *Beelzebub*, the prince of the devils. See also *Matth.* x. 25. *Chap.* xii. 27. *Mark* iii. 22. *Luke* xi. 15, 18, 19. There are several opinions of learned men concerning this *Baalzebub* : some explain it thus, *Zebub*, in the Hebrew language, signifies a flie ; *Baalzebub*, the God flie. Others derive it from *Beelzebul*, the God of dung, and conceive this name to be given him by the Jews in derision. But since in the New-Testament he is called the prince of devils, I confess Monsieur *Jurieu*'s notion ‡ pleases me, that he is the same with the *Pluto* of the Greeks and Ro-

* Hist. des Dogmes, pag. 625. † Phenician Hist. pag. 61—64.

‡ Histoire des Dogmes, &c. p. 631.

mans, the prince of the infernal Gods. He cannot be their *Baal* or *Jupiter*, whom they account a heavenly and benign deity ; but must be *Pluto*, a malignant and mischievous one, under whom are *Proserpina*, the *Furies*, the *Harpies*, the *Larvæ* and *Lemures*, mentioned both by the heathen poets and philosophers, as a prince over all these wicked spirits. Upon this principle, that *Pluto* teaches the way to expel all evil spirits, the *Jews* accuse our Saviour of casting out devils by the prince of the devils. The title that's given to *Baalzebub* the God of *Accaron*, is very like the name of *Acheron* given to *Pluto* by the poets ; which *Acheron*, they call a river in hell, not far from *Pluto's* palace. The name *Baal* being put before *Zebub*, does not hinder *Pluto* from being known by that name, *Baal* being a general title given to all the Gods. Tho' *Jupiter* be sometimes meant by *Baal*, yet the *Greeks* and *Romans* gave to *Pluto* also the name of *Jupiter*, as is plain from *Virgil* †. The name of *Baalzebub*, God of flies, and of *Serapis*, prince of locusts, may be ascribed to *Pluto*, because the flies and locusts were two of the greatest plagues of the South and East countries of *Asia* and *Afric* : clouds of locusts fly together, cross these regions, and leave nothing green behind them. They fly with such violence and swiftness, that in a moment they devour whole provinces. *Pliny* ‡ describes them as one of the plagues inflicted by the wrath of the Gods, and as very terrible in *Cyrene*. Now the heathens accounted *Pluto* the author and master of these plagues ; and therefore worshipped him to keep them from harm. I cannot positively affirm what the heathens understood by *Pluto*. Some conceive, that as *Cybele* and *Ceres* signifies the surface of the earth bearing crops, and yielding fruits ; so this deity signifies the virtue diffused in the bowels of the earth, which agrees to what is said by *Cicero* ||, *The power and virtue of the earth and nature, is dedicated to Pluto*. *Jurieu* says **, *I know not whe-*

† *Æneid*. 4. Lin. 638. *Sacra Jovi, Stygio, quæ rite incepta paravi.*

‡ *Hist. Natur.* lib. 11. cap. 29. || *De Natura Deorum*, l. 2. §. 66. *Terrena autem vis atque natura Diti patri dedicata est.*

** *Hist. des Dogmes*, &c. pag. 645.

whether in Pluto's fable concerning the rape of Proserpina, and her return into hell, there may not be something of the rape of Dinah by Shechem the son of Hamor, who upon it was sent with all his subjects into hell by Jacob's sons, who put them all to the sword. But I leave this as a meer conjecture.

Another Deity of the Phenicians and Syrians is Dagon, the God of *Ashdod*, a city of the *Philistines*, called by the Greeks *Azotos*. We hear of this idol in the book of *Judges*, Chap. xvi. 23. The Lords of the *Philistines* gathered themselves together for to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their God, and they said, our God has delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And in 1 *Sam.* v. 2—5. The *Philistines* took the ark of God, and brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. When they of *Ashdod* rose early on the morrow, behold Dagon was fallen on his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold, only the stump of Dagon was left to him.——When *Israel* was defeated in the latter end of *Saul's* reign, that Prince killed himself, lest he should fall alive into the hands of the *Philistines*; and on the morrow, when the *Philistines* had stripped him, they put his armour in the house of their Gods, and fastned his head in the temple of Dagon, 1 *Chron.* x. 4—8—10. This temple continued till the time of the *Maccabees*: for the author of the first book says*, That *Jonathan* having defeated the army of *Apollonius*, General to *Demetrius*, they fled to *Ashdod*, and took sanctuary in Βηθδαγών, the house of Dagon their idol; but *Jonathan* set *Ashdod* on fire, and burnt the temple of Dagon, and all that were fled thither. Some derive the word Dagon from Dag a fish, others from Dagan, which signifies corn or wheat. Thus *Philo Biblius*, who translated *Sanchoniathon*, says, Cælus married his sister Ge†, and had by her four sons; Ilus, who is called *Cronus*, Betylus, and Dagon, ὃς ἐστὶ Σίτων, who is *Siton*, or the God of corn. And a little after he adds, But Dagon, after he had found out bread-

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corn,

* 1 *Maccabees*, chap. 10. ver. 82—85. chap. 11. ver. 4.

† *Apud Euseb. de Præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 10.*

corn, and the plough, was called Ζεύς ἀροτριός, *Jupiter the Plougher*. But the authority of this imperfect fragment, of which we have already discoursed, is not so great as to determine us in this affair. We rather incline to think that *Dagon* comes from *Dag*, a fish. This is agreeable to the account the *Jews* give of him. *R. David Kimchi* says *, *Dagon from the navel downwards had the shape of a fish, and therefore was called Dagon; and from the navel upwards a man's shape, and the palms of his hands were cut off, as 'tis written, upon the threshold*. This is the interpretation of what is said in the sacred text, *Dagon was left alone*; that is, he had nothing but the shape of a fish remaining. This *Dagon* then seems to be the *Neptune* of the *Greeks* and *Romans*. We have already asserted that the heathen deities in the Western parts of the world came from the East. We have found *Saturn* in *Moloch*, *Jupiter* in *Baal*, *Pluto* in *Beelzebub*; and now we find *Neptune* in their *Dagon*. It was one part of the monstrous idolatry of the gentile world, who wanted the invaluable privilege of divine revelation, that they worshipped fishes, as appears by the most eminent profane writers. *Cicero* says †, *The Syrians worship a fish*. *Xenophon* speaking of the river *Calus*, says ‡, *That it was full of great tame fishes, which the Syrians worshipped as Gods, and would not suffer any hurt to be done either to them or pigeons*. And to come nearer our purpose, we find from *Diodorus Siculus* ||, “ That at the city *Ascalon* “ in *Syria*, or not far from it, there is a great deep lake “ abounding in plenty of fish; and in the neighbour- “ hood thereof there is a temple of the Goddess, called “ by the *Syrians*, *Derceto*, who has the face of a woman, “ and the rest of her body like a fish; for which this “ reason is given by the most sensible men of the country, “ that *Venus* having a spleen against the Goddess, caused “ her to fall in love with a handsome young man in *Sy-* “ *ria*, one of those who sacrificed. She conceived a “ daughter by him, and was ashamed of the fact, and “ there-

* Kimchi in 1 Sam. v. 2. Apud Jurieu Hist. des Dogmes, pag. 645.

† De natura Deorum, lib. 3. §. 39. *Pisces Syri venerantur.*

‡ De expeditione Cyri. || Bibl. hist. lib. 2. cap. 4. p. m. 89, 90.

“ therefore killed the young man, and exposed the
 “ girl, when brought into the world, in a rocky desert;
 “ and, for grief, precipitated herself into the lake,
 “ where she was transformed into a fish. Therefore
 “ the *Syrians* to this day, *says he*, abstain from that
 “ kind of creature, and worship the fishes as Gods.”

Lucian says*, “ I have seen the image of *Derceto* in
 “ *Phenicia*, an unusual sight, it was half a woman, and
 “ from the knees down to the feet, like the tail of a fish.”

All this makes our opinion more probable; for tho’ *Dagon* be a male, yet nothing hinders but there might be two deities, one male, and the other female worshipped in the same country, under the same shape of a man and a fish. As to what is further signified or hid under the names of *Dagon* and *Neptune*, *Jurieu* † conceives ’tis the sea, and the spirit by which that element is ruled, the cause of so many different motions and generations. And as to Animal-Gods, he takes *Dagon* for *Japhet*, because the share of his partition, and that of his posterity, was in the isles and lands beyond the sea, that is in *Europe*.

Having explained the chief heathen Gods of *Palestine*, something may be said of others that defiled the holy land; tho’ little certainty can be had about them, but only their names. These are the false deities which were brought into *Samaria*, after *Shalmanezzer* carried the ten tribes captive, 2 *King*. xvii. 24, 29, 30, 31. *And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel.*——

Every nation made Gods of their own.—— *And the men of Babylon made Succoth-Benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvaites burnt their children in fire to Adramelech, and Anammelech, the Gods of Sepharvaim.* We have discoursed of these two last already, as the same with *Molech*. As to the rest of those impious deities, which they put in the houses of the high-places, which the *Samaritans* had
 O 3 made,

* *De Dea Syra*, operum Tom. 2. pag. 651.

† *Hist. des Dogmes & des Cultes*, pag. 651.

made, I begin with *Nergal*, which may be derived from *Nir*, *Fire* or *Light*, and *Galal*, *to move* ; so that it signifies a *shining* or *moving light*. Thus 'tis not hard to guess, that the sun is meant by this *Nergal*, which the men of *Cutha* worshipped, as the *Persians* generally did. As to *Ashima*, the idol of the men of *Hamath*, some conceive it to be a rural deity, as *Pan* and the *Satyrs*, the deities of the woods represented with sharp-pointed ears and goats feet. But the learned *Peter Jurieu* thinks* it may be derived from *Esh-Maja*, the *fire of heaven*, or *Esh-Joma*, a *daily fire* : all which signifies the sun, of which the fire is an emblem ; and 'tis well known that the sun and fire were the idols of those countries, from which these men had been removed. The *Avians* made *Nibbaz* and *Tartak*. The *Rabbins* say, *The first of these is a dog briskly barking*. But tho' the *Egyptians* worshipped that creature, there is no evidence that the *Assyrians* did it. *Monf. Jurieu* † then derives the name of this idol from *Nipchaz*, *to leap, run, or make haste* ; a proper Epithet for the sun, which both the *Chaldeans* and *Persians* worshipped above all, and almost in all their idols, which ought to turn our conjecture on that side. *Tartak* is the other idol of *Ava*, which *Jurieu* inclines to derive from *Ratbak*, a *Chariot*. If *Tartak* can be derived from it, one might say, that it signifies the sun mounted in a Chariot.

We are almost as much in the dark as to *Nifroch*. He was the God of that *Senacherib* who so profanely insulted *Hezekiah* for trusting in God Almighty : but the Lord fighting for the *Jews*, by his angel, destroyed in one night 185000 of his army, which forced him to a precipitate and disorderly retreat. The sacred text, 2 *Kings* xix. 36, 37. says, *He returned and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nifroch his God, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword*. I have already proved ‡, that *Herodote* gives an account of this defeat of *Senacherib*, tho' his relation be much disguised, and touches some other

* Ubi supra.

† Ubi supra, pag. 657.

‡ See Chap. i. pag. 126.

other matters of fact mentioned in sacred Scripture. To return to *Nisroch*, the word *Nisra* signifies a *young eagle* ||. This makes it probable that *Jupiter Belus* was worshipped by the *Assyrians*, under the figure of an *Eagle*, and by the name of *Nisroch*.

There is yet a female Deity. The men of *Babylon* made *Succoth-Benoth*, which properly signifies the *tabernacle of daughters**; *Benoth* or *Venoth*, and *Venus* have a great affinity, the initial letter being easily interchanged. And if we look into the Rites whereby this *Babylonian Venus* was served, we may find them in *Herodote*. He says†, “ There is an abominable custom among the “ *Babylonians*, that all their women are obliged once in “ their life to become prostitutes to strangers at the tem- “ ple of *Venus*. Such as are rich, and will not expose them- “ selves, keep before the temple of the Goddess in their “ chariots, under arches, with their domesticks behind “ them. But the greatest part sit in the temple of *Ve- “ nus*, their heads being crowned with nosegays and “ garlands, some coming out, others going in. There “ are walks separated with lines, leading to all places “ where strangers walk, and chuse those they like best. “ When a woman has once taken place, she dares not “ return home, without a piece of money thrown into “ her bosom by some stranger, and without being brought “ by them out of the temple to lie with her. When the “ stranger gives the earnest-money, he must say, *For so “ much I ask the Goddess Mylitta for thee*; *Venus* being “ called *Mylitta* by the *Assyrians*. How small soever “ the money be, ’tis unlawful to reject it, being applied “ for sacred uses. Nor is it allowed for a woman to re- “ fuse a stranger, but, without chusing, she must follow “ the first who offers her money. In fine, when a woman “ has been with a stranger, she is thought to have done “ her duty, to make the Goddess favourable to her; and “ then she returns home, and will not prostitute herself for

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“ 3

|| Vide Leusdeni Philologum Hebræo-mixtum, pag. 302.

* Vide Selden de Diis Syris, lib. 2. cap. 7. Leusden ubi supra.

† Lib. 2. cap. 199. pag. 83.

“ a great reward. Women who are beautiful get soon
 “ home, but hard-favoured ones are obliged to continue
 “ long in the temple, before they fulfil the law; nay, some
 “ of these poor wretches stay three or four years.” In *Cyprus*, there is a law much of the same nature. *Strabo* tells this story in fewer words ‡, “ That ’tis the custom of all
 “ *Babylonian* women to have to do with some stranger.
 “ They come in, or rather offer themselves in a crowd to
 “ him, being well set out, each one crowned with a gar-
 “ land. The stranger who makes choice of one, throws
 “ into her lap a piece of money, and carries her out of the
 “ temple; the money is consecrated to *Venus*.” These passages may explain what we read in the book of *Baruch*, where describing the Idolatry of the *Chaldeans* and *Babylonians*, he says *, “ The women surrounded with lines,
 “ sit in the way burning their chaff, and when any of them
 “ is pitched out by a passenger to lie with him, she up-
 “ braids her neighbour that she had not the same ho-
 “ nour done her, and that her line was not broke.” Thus they gloried in their shame. The same abominable custom was practised in other parts, as at *Sicca* in *Afric*, as we find in *Valerius Maximus* †, and at *Corinth*, where was a temple of *Venus*, at which the *Corinthians* had consecrated above 1000 *Courtesans*, who sold themselves at a dear rate. This the law of God forbids, *Lev. xix. 29. Do not prostitute thy daughter to be a whore, lest the land fall to whoredom, and become full of wickedness.* But this was the vile *Succoth-Benoth*, the daughters of tabernacles among the heathen, or the *Babylonian Venus*, and these the abominable rites of their superstition, which should render their Religion detestable to every mortal.

This leads me to another Idol spoke of in Scripture, and with which the holy land was defiled; namely *Ash-toreth*, the Goddess of the *Zidonians*, frequently joined with *Baal* ||: The termination in the *Hebrew* plainly proves her to be a female. Among the *Greeks* and *Latins* she was called *Astarta* or *Astarte*. Dr. *Cumberland* (‡), from that

‡ Geograp. lib. 16. pag. 745.

* Baruch vi. 42, 43.

† Memorabilium lib. 2. cap. 6. §. 15.

|| Judges ii. 13. and iii. 7.

(‡) Phenician History, pag. 125.

that fragment of *Sanchoniathon*, preserved by *Eusebius*, which we have so oft spoke of, where it is said, *Cronus* begat on *Astarte* seven daughters called *Titanides* or *Artemides*, is of opinion, “ That she was the wife of *Cronus* or *Cham*, the great patron of Idolatry.” *Plutarch* in his treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris* intimates that she was queen at *Byblus*, and *Melcander*, which is *Molech*, i. e. *Cronus*, was king there.—Besides, *Astarte* probably being the Syrian Goddess, of whom *Lucian* says, “ That there was in her temple at *Hierapolis*, a constant commemoration of the flood, and its drying up, made in her service, inclines me to think that she was the sister or wife of *Ham*, who shared in that great deliverance; for no other Syrian Goddess is so near that time: and the city *Ashtoreth Carnaim* bearing her name at *Abraham*’s entring into *Canaan*, assures us that she lived before that time; and these limits fix her and *Cronus* at least within four centuries next the flood.” *Strabo* also says* at *Edeffa*, and *Hierapolis*, that is the holy city, they worship the Goddess *Atergatis*. Some authors understand by *Baal*, the Sun, and by *Ashtoreth* the Moon. ’Tis said, 2 *Kings* xxiii. 4. That *Josiah* commanded—to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for *Baal*, and for the grove, as in our version: but in the *Hebrew* it is said to *Ashera*. Any body may see there could be no grove in the temple of *Jerusalem*. *Ashera* must then be the name of an idol. The same deity was probably worshipped by the *Greeks* and *Romans* under the name of *Diana* or *Lucina*, the Goddess of woods and groves.

There is yet another deity mentioned by the prophet, *Ezekiel*, Chap. viii. 14. Then he brought me to the gate of the Lord’s house, which was towards the North, and behold there sat women weeping for *Tammuz*. The vulgar latin version renders it, *plangentes Adonidem*, weeping for *Adonis*. There is nothing offers more probable on this subject, than what *Jerom* has on the text; the sum whereof is †, That according to the fable, *Adonis* the darling

* *Strabo* Geogr. lib. 16, pag. 748.† *Hieron*. Tom. 5. Fol. m. 188.

darling of *Venus*, a handsome youth, being killed in the month of *June*, by a wild boar, was raised again from the dead in the same month; women were used to celebrate a solemn feast to him, in which they first wept for him as dead, and then sung and praised him as returned to life again. He adds, “ that the wiser Gentiles interpret the fable of *Adonis* dying and living again, to “ the seeds sown in the earth, where they corrupt first, “ and then spring up again.” Thus the women at *Jerusalem* wept for *Adonis* the darling of *Venus*. *Lucian de Dea Syra*, if he be the author of that treatise, for he seems to be a more ingenuous *Pagan* than *Lucian*, who derides all religion, and plainly sets up for atheism; in his *Jupiter Confutatus*, and *Jupiter Tragædus*, and some other treatises †, tells us ‡, “ I saw at *Byblis* the great “ temple of *Venus*, in which are yearly celebrated the “ mysteries of *Adonis*, to which I am initiated; for “ ’tis said he was killed in the country by a wild boar; “ and in perpetual remembrance of this event, a public mourning is yearly celebrated with doleful lamentations; then a funeral, as of a dead body: and the next day is celebrated his Resurrection; for ’tis said he went up to heaven. One of the ceremonies is for women to have their heads shaven, as the *Egyptians* at the death of *Apis*. Those who refuse to be shaven, are obliged to prostitute themselves a whole day to strangers, and the money which is got that way is consecrated to *Venus*.” *Eusebius* || mentions a temple of *Venus* at the top of Mount *Libanus*, which *Constantine* the Great caused to be demolished. “ It was, says he, “ the school of uncleanness to all people of a debauched life. These effeminate men, who deserve not to be called men, defiled themselves by a most infamous prostitution, pleasing the devil, and serving him with base women. In short, the lewdest crimes were committed in that temple, as in a most filthy place, and there was no magistrate to punish them, because honest people durst not come near it.” From what has been

† *Luciani opera*, Tom. 2. pag. m. 148.
 || *De vita Constantini*, lib. 3. cap. 56.

‡ *De Dea Syra*. pag. 658.

been said, it appears that the *Phenicians* had a feast at a set time of the year, celebrated with all prophaneness, in which they wept with their *Venus* for the loss of *Adonis*. *Byblis* and the top of *Lebanon*, or *Aphacus*, were the places where these feasts were observed in the borders of *Judea*. The *Egyptians* called this God *Tammuz* or *Am-muz*, which signifies in their language *hidden*, because the rites of this idol were covered or secret *. Nothing can be more probable, than that the *Jewish* women, according to the prophet's complaint, were come to that lamentable height of wickedness, as to celebrate that profane feast at the temple of *Jerusalem*.

There are other Deities less known, and what is meant by them not so universally agreed on; as these in *Isa. lxxv. 11*. *But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop [Le Gad] and that furnish drink-offerings to that number.* In the *Hebrew*, *Le Meni* or *to Meni*. Here are two names, *Gad* and *Meni*, which seem to be false heathen Gods, to whose honour sacrifice and drink-offerings were made. The *septuagint* version of that text may be thus rendred, *You who have forsaken me, and forgot my holy mountain; you prepare a table τῷ δαίμονι for the devil, and fill a mixture τῇ τύχῃ to fortune.* The vulgar Latin thus; *Qui ponitis fortunæ mensam, & libatis super eam; Who set a table to Fortune, and sacrifice upon it.* I shall not offer the several thoughts of interpreters and criticks upon this text, but only what seems most probable. 'Tis a constant tradition among the *Hebrews*, that *Gad* signifies *good fortune*; that is, the star and genius that presides over happy births. When *Zilpah* bare *Jacob* a Son, *Leah* said, *Bagad, a troop cometh.* The ancient Paraphrast *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* read, *The happy star or good fortune is come.* As for *Meni*, some derive it from *Manah*, to *tell* or *reckon*, and conceive it signifies a certain number of stars, or the seven planets. *Monf. Jurieu* † inclines to this opinion, that *Gad* and *Meni* are the two Genius's that preside over generation, the two stars that

* Greenhill on *Ezek. viii. 14*. † *Hist. des Dogmes, &c.* pag. 701.

that over-rule nativities ; and probably these two are the Sun and the Moon. The Sun is the grand principle of generation, and therefore ought to have the first place, and the moon the next to it. To confirm this, he adduces a passage of *Strabo* *, “ That at the city *Cabira* “ in *Armenia*, there is the temple of *Menis Pharnaces*, “ to which belongs a town called *Armeia*, in which are “ many slaves, and under whose Jurisdiction is a district “ consecrated to the temple, the revenue whereof belongs to the priests. The kings have so great a devotion to it, that they swear by the fortune of the king “ and the table of *Pharnaces*. ’Tis a temple of the “ Moon, as that in *Albania*, and others in *Phrygia*, under the very same name of the temple of *Menis*.” Now upon this table ’tis highly probable there were victuals consecrated, offered to the Genius’s served in the temple, viz. the Sun and the Moon. *Herodote* also mentions the table of the Sun among the *Ethiopians*. “ Such, says “ he †, is the table of the Sun. There is in the suburbs “ a green field covered every night by the magistrates of “ the town, with all sorts of fourfooted beasts roasted. “ When the Sun is up, all people are free to come and “ feast there. The inhabitants say the earth produces and “ yields these things continually.” The *Greek* word *μην*, the Moon, and *μην*, a month, do so apparently come from *Meni*, that one cannot but think *μην* and *Meni* signify the same star ; and consequently *Meni* of *Isaiab* is the Moon. *Israel* was so mad upon these idols, as to prepare a table for them, and to pour out mixt wine for drink-offerings to them : they would pinch their families, rather than stint their superstitions.

Another Idol-Deity is the Goddess *Sheshach*, *Jer.* xxv. 15—26. Thus saith the Lord God of *Israel*, Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee to drink it.—All the kings of the North, far and near, and all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth, and the king of *Sheshach* shall drink after them. *Jerem.* li. 41. How is *Sheshach* taken?
and

* *Geograph.* lib. 12.† *Lib.* 3. cap. 18.

and how is the praise of the whole earth surprized? How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations? Here both *Babylon* and *Sheshach* are mentioned, and the latter expounded by the former. 'Tis conceived that *Babylon* is called *Sheshach*, by the name of one of her Idols, in an opprobrious sense, as usual with the prophets, from the Idol *Sbach* worshipped there, and in whose honour they kept a festival for five days together: And 'tis said, that during this festival, *Cyrus* took *Babylon*. *Athenæus* speaks of this feast, saying *, *Berosus*, in the first book of the *Babylonish history*, relates, that on the 16th of the *Calends* of *September*, the feast *Saicea* was celebrated at *Babylon* for five days, during which time it was customary for masters to obey their servants: one of them being then master of the house, was clothed in a royal garment, and called *Zoganez*. *Ctesias* makes mention of the same feast †, and *Strabo* discourses of it more fully ‡.

Another Deity is the *Mabuzzim*, of which *Daniel* speaks, chap. xi. 37, 38, 39. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any God: for he shall magnify himself above all. But in his estate shall he honour the God of forces, [in the Hebrew, *Mahuzzim*:] and a God whom his fathers knew not, shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a most strange God, whom he shall acknowledge, and encrease with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. *Monf. Jurieu* is of opinion||, that the person here meant is *Antiochus Epiphanes*; that this God *Maozzim*, or *Mabuzzim*, whom he was to honour with his homage and gifts, is the *Roman* eagles, or the *Roman* empire, to which the soldiers bowed down; and *Antiochus* himself, who was the terror of *Asia*, became tributary to them. But I am pleased with the opinion of *Joseph Mede* better: He conceives ** this chapter of *Daniel*, at least a part of it, is to be

* *Deipnosophistæ*, lib. 14. cap. 17.

† *Ctesias fragmenta subjuncta Herodoto*, Edit. Lond. 1679. pag. 674.

‡ *Geograph.* lib. 11. || *Hist. des Dogmes, &c.* pag. 706, & seq.

** *Apostacy of latter Times*, pag. m. 93, &c.

be applied to the latter times of the *Roman* empire, and to the church's apostacy and defection under the reign of *Antichrist*, and that the *Mabuzzims* are the *Protectores Dii*, such as Saints and Angels, which the church of *Rome* worships. Thus then he gives the following paraphrase or explication of that passage in *Daniel* ‡, “ Toward the
 “ end of the reign of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the *Roman*
 “ shall prevail and set up the fourth kingdom, making
 “ himself master of the kingdom of *Macedon*, and ad-
 “ vancing himself from this time forward by continual
 “ conquest, shall lord it over every king and nation ; yea,
 “ Christ the God of Gods, and Lord of the kings of the
 “ earth—the *Roman* shall mock, blaspheme, and cru-
 “ cify ; and by most bloody edicts, shall persecute and
 “ massacre his servants the Christians, and yet shall pro-
 “ sper in his empire, until these outrageous times be en-
 “ ded, that is, until the days of *Constantine*. When that
 “ time comes, the *Roman* state shall forsake the Idols,
 “ and false Gods, whom their fathers worshipped ; and
 “ shall acknowledge Christ a God, whom their fathers
 “ knew not. At that time the desire of women, and
 “ married life shall be discountenanced ;——yea, soon
 “ after the *Roman* shall carry, as if he regarded not any
 “ God, and with antichristian pride, shall magnify him-
 “ self over all. With the Christian God, who is a
 “ jealous God, and to be worshipped alone, he shall
 “ worship *Mabuzzims*, saints or angels, as protectors,
 “ even in his seat and temple, and honour them with
 “ gold and silver, precious stones, and pleasant things.
 “ And tho’ the Christians God, whom he shall profess
 “ to acknowledge and worship, can endure no compe-
 “ titors, yet shall he consecrate his temples and monas-
 “ teries, ecclesiastical holds, jointly to the Christians
 “ God, and these *Mabuzzims*, *Deo & Sanctis* ; yea, he
 “ shall share whole kingdoms and provinces among them,
 “ *St. George* shall have *England* ; *St. Andrew*, *Scotland* ;
 “ *St. Dennis*, *France* ; *St. James*, *Spain* ; *St. Mark*, *Ve-*
 “ *nice* ; and bear rule as presidents and patrons of their
 “ several Countries.”. Thus *Joseph Mede*. And he has
 many

‡ *Daniel* xi. 36—46.

many learned remarks in his book of the *Apostacy of the latter times*, to confirm this opinion. The continuators of Mr. *Pool's* notes, have the same sentiments on the text; and an anonymous author, in a book entitled, *The Visions of Daniel explained*, printed at *London* in 1700, where are many thoughts which please me.

Tho' under the Idols we have discoursed of, *Moloch*, *Baal*, *Ashtoreth*, and the rest, the Sun, Moon, and Stars lay hid; yet most of the people, especially the vulgar, knew not what they worshipped under these names. But it appears that the Sun, Moon, and Host of Heaven were worshipped by the *Jews*, when they turned to Idolatry, after the example of the neighbouring heathen, without images, by an humble prostration before them, or their emblems, light and fire. The God of *Israel* does expressly forbid it, *Deut. iv. 15—19*. *Take ye therefore good heed—lest thou lift up thine eyes to heaven; and when thou seest the Sun, and the Moon, and all the Host of Heaven, should be driven to worship them and serve them.* He expressly commands any man or woman to be stoned to death, that shall be convicted to have served other Gods, and worshipped them, either the Sun, Moon, or any of the Host of Heaven, *Deut. xvii. 3—5*. But in the time of the *Jews* apostacy, they and their wicked kings broke through all these prohibitions; for in the history of *Josiah*, we read, “ That this religious prince put
“ down the idolatrous priests, whom the king of *Judah*
“ had ordained to burn incense in the high places, in the
“ cities of *Judah*, and in the places round about *Jeru-*
“ *salem*; them also that burnt incense unto *Baal*, to the
“ Sun, and to the Moon, and to the Planets, and to all
“ the Host of Heaven. He took away also the horses
“ that the kings of *Judah* had given to the Sun, at the
“ entering in of the House of the Lord, by the chamber of
“ *Nathan-Melech* the chamberlain, which was in the
“ suburbs, and burnt the chariots of the Sun with fire,
“ *2 Kings xxiii. 5—11*.” This adoration of the Sun
passed into *Egypt*; for the prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. *xliii.*
10, 12, 13. foretelling the ruin of that country, says,
2
Nebu-

Nebuchadnezzar shall break the images of Bethshemesh, or of the house of the Sun, and the houses of the Gods of the Egyptians shall be burn with fire. Finally, It cannot be denied that the Sun was worshipped without veils by the Syrians, and afterward by the Hebrews, as we see by the prophet *Ezekiel*, chap. viii. 16. He brought me into the inner-court of the Lord's house, and behold at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the East, and they worshipped the Sun toward the East.

In the introduction to this chapter, when discoursing of the Origin of Idolatry, I proved that this worship of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, was the most ancient kind of Idol-worship, long before images were introduced. To which I add the testimony of *Diodorus Siculus**. “ The most
“ ancient people of *Egypt*, says he, beholding the world
“ above them, and astonished with the sight of the uni-
“ verse, did think the Sun and the Moon were the two
“ principal and eternal Gods: the latter they called
“ *Isis*, and the former *Osiris*, agreeable to the etymolo-
“ gy of the name; for if you explain *Osiris* by a *Greek*
“ word, it will signify many eyes, and justly, since the
“ Sun stretching his rays every where, beholds the whole
“ earth and sea, as with many eyes.” From this an-
cient idolatrous worship of the Sun, several places in *Canaan* probably took their names, as *Hen-shemesh*, the fountain of the Sun, *Josh. xv. 7.* *Hirshemesh*, *Josh. xix. 41.* the city of the Sun. From the worship of the Sun, toward the *East*, mentioned by *Ezekiel*, rose the custom of some Christian Churches to worship *Eastward*, which Pope *Leo I.* does condemn as a superstition not to be tolerated†. From the worship the *Persians* gave to the Sun, flow the horses of the Sun, and the *Hammanim*, or chariots of the Sun, which the good king *Josiah* destroyed. *Abenezra* says, these *Hammanim* were arched houses, built in the form of a chariot, in honour of the Sun‡.

The

* *Bibl. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 11.*

† *Serm. 7. De Nativitate.*

‡ *In Isa. xvii. 8. Apud Jurieu, Hist. des Dogmes, &c.*

The *Persians* and *Chaldeans* being very ancient, who formed some kind of commonwealth in a little time after the deluge, when they built the tower of *Babel*, near the same place where the city of *Babylon* was afterwards erected; it may be proper here to explain their Idolatry, especially since it may illustrate and confirm what we have been discoursing concerning the worship of the Sun.

The learned Dr. *Prideaux* * gives this account of the Religion of the *Persians*: “ The *Sabians* worshipped the
 “ Sun, Moon, and Stars *per sacella*, that is, by taberna-
 “ cles, and afterwards by images. By these tabernacles
 “ they meant the orbs themselves, in which the intelli-
 “ gences had their habitations. And therefore when they
 “ paid their devotions to any one of them, they directed
 “ their worship toward the planet, in which they sup-
 “ posed he dwelt. But these orbs, by their rising and
 “ setting, being as much under the horizon as above,
 “ they were at a loss how to address to them in their ab-
 “ sence. To remedy this, they had recourse to the in-
 “ vention of images, in which, after their consecration,
 “ they thought these Intelligences, or inferiour Deities,
 “ to be as much present by their influence, as in the pla-
 “ nets themselves, and that all addresses to them were
 “ made as effectually before the one, as before the other,
 “ and this was the beginning of Image-worship among
 “ them. To these images were given the names of the
 “ planets they represented, which were the same they are
 “ still called by. And hence it is, that we find *Saturn*,
 “ *Jupiter*, *Mars*, *Apollo*, *Mercury*, *Venus*, and *Diana*, to
 “ be first ranked in the polytheism of the ancients. For
 “ they were their first Gods. After this, a notion ob-
 “ taining, that good men departed had a power with
 “ God also to mediate and intercede for them, they dei-
 “ fied many of those whom they thought to be such;
 “ and hence the number of their Gods increased in the
 “ idolatrous times of the world. This Religion first be-
 “ gan among the *Chaldeans*, which their knowledge in
 astro-

* Connect. of Hist. of Old and New Test. Part I. pag. 177—179.
 in Octavo.

“ astronomy helped to lead them to. And from this
 “ it was, that *Abraham* separated himself when he came
 “ out of *Chaldea*. From the *Chaldeans*, it spread itself
 “ over all the *East*, where the professors of it had the
 “ name of *Sabians*. From them it passed into *Egypt*,
 “ and from thence to the *Grecians*, who propagated it
 “ to all the *western* nations of the world.——The
 “ remainder of this Sect still subsists in the *East*, under
 “ the name of *Sabians*, which they pretend to have re-
 “ ceived from *Sabius*, a son of *Seth*'s. And among the
 “ books, wherein the doctrines of their sect are con-
 “ tained, they have one which they call the book of
 “ *Seth*, and say, that it was written by that patriarch.
 “ That which hath given them the greatest credit among
 “ the people of the *East*, is, that the best of their astro-
 “ nomers have been of this Sect, as *Thebet Ebn Korrah*,
 “ *Albattani*, and others. For the Stars being the Gods
 “ they worshipped, they made them the chief subject of
 “ their studies. These *Sabians*, in the consecrating of
 “ their images, used many incantations to draw down
 “ into them from the Stars those intelligences, for whom
 “ they erected them, whose power and influence, they
 “ held, did afterward dwell in them. And from hence
 “ the whole foolery of *Telefms*, which some make so
 “ much ado about, had its original.” [They are now,
 since the growth of Christianity, and the spreading of
Mahometism in *Persia*, reduced to an inconsiderable
 Sect; but in ancient times there were very many of them
 in the world.]

“ Directly opposite to these were the *Magians*, an-
 “ other Sect, who had their original in the same *eastern*
 “ countries. For they abominating all images, wor-
 “ shipped God only by fire. They began first in *Per-*
 “ *sia*, and there, and in *India*, were the only places
 “ where this sect was propagated, and there they re-
 “ main even to this day. Their chief doctrine was, that
 “ there were two principles, one which was the cause of
 “ all good, and the other the cause of all evil, that is
 “ to say, God and the Devil. That the former is re-
 “ presented by light, and the other by darkness, and
 “ that

“ that of the composition of these two, all things in
 “ the world are made. The good God they name *Yaz-*
 “ *dan*, and also *Ormuzd*, and the evil God *Abraman*.
 “ The former is by the *Greeks* called *Oramasdes*, and
 “ the latter *Arimanius*.——Some of them contended,
 “ that the good God only was eternal, and that the
 “ other was created. But they both agreed in this, that
 “ there will be a continual opposition between these two
 “ till the end of the world: that then the good God
 “ shall overcome the evil God, and that from thence-
 “ forward, each of them shall have his world to him-
 “ self; that is, the good God his world with all good
 “ men with him, and the evil God his world with all
 “ evil men with him: that darkness is the truest sym-
 “ bol of the evil God, and light the truest symbol of the
 “ good God. And therefore they always worshipped him
 “ before fire, as being the cause of light, and especially
 “ before the sun, as being, in their opinion, the per-
 “ fectest fire, and causing the perfectest light. And for
 “ this reason, in all their temples they had fire con-
 “ tinually burning on altars erected for that purpose.
 “ Before these sacred fires, they offered up all their pub-
 “ lick devotions, and their private devotions before their
 “ private fires in their own houses.——These were the
 “ tenets of this Sect, when on the death of *Cambyses*,
 “ *Smerdis* and *Patizithes*, the two chief ring-leaders of
 “ it, contended for the sovereignty.”

The same author informs us*, “ That in the time of
 “ *Darius Hystaspes* appeared in *Persia* the famous pro-
 “ phet of the *Magians*, whom the *Persians* call *Zer-*
 “ *dusht*, or *Zaratush*, and the *Greeks*, *Zoroastres*.——
 “ He was the greatest impostor, except *Mahomet*, that
 “ ever appeared in the world, and had all the craft and
 “ enterprising boldness of that *Arab*, but much more
 “ knowledge, being skilled in all the learning of the
 “ *East* that was in his time; whereas the other could
 “ neither write nor read: and particularly, he was
 “ thoroughly versed in the *Jewish* Religion, and in all
 P 2 “ the

* See *Prideaux's Connection*, Part I. pag. 211, to 227.

“ the sacred writings of the Old Testament then ex-
 “ tant.—’Tis generally said of him, that he had been
 “ a servant to one of the prophets of *Israel*; and hence
 “ ’tis conceived, that he was, as to his origin, a *Jew*.—
 “ He might have served under *Daniel*, who lived till the
 “ time of *Cyrus*, and therefore *Zoroastres* might have
 “ been his contemporary.—He did not found a new
 “ Religion, as his successor in imposture *Mahomet* did,
 “ but only took upon him to reform the old one of the
 “ *Magians*, which had been for many ages past the an-
 “ cient Religion of the *Medes*, as well as of the *Persians*.
 “ —The chief reformation he made in the *Magian*
 “ superstition, was in the first principle of it. For where-
 “ as they before had held the being of two first causes,
 “ the one *good* and the other *evil*, as has been said, he
 “ taught a principle superiour to them both, one su-
 “ preme God, who created both light and darkness, and
 “ out of these, according to the pleasure of his will,
 “ made all things else.—In fine, his doctrine was,
 “ that there was one supreme Being, independent and self-
 “ existing from all eternity. That under him there were
 “ two Angels, one of light, and the other of darkness;
 “ and that these two, out of the mixture of light and
 “ darkness, made all things that are. That they are in
 “ a perpetual struggle with each other: where the An-
 “ gel of light prevails, there the most is good; and
 “ where the Angel of darkness prevails, there the most
 “ is evil. That this struggle shall continue to the end
 “ of the world. That then there shall be a general Re-
 “ surrection, and a Day of Judgment, wherein a just
 “ retribution shall be rendred to all according to their
 “ works. After which the Angel of darkness, and his
 “ disciples, shall suffer everlasting darkness, for the pu-
 “ nishment of their evil deeds; and the Angel of light,
 “ and his disciples, shall go into a world of their own,
 “ where they shall receive everlasting light, as the re-
 “ ward due unto their good deeds: and after this they
 “ shall remain separated for ever, and light and dark-
 “ ness shall be no more mixed together to all eternity.
 “ All this the remainder of that Sect, which is now in

“ *Persia* and *India*, do, without variation after so many
“ ages, still hold even to this day.——Another refor-
“ mation, which he made in the *Magian* Religion, was,
“ that he caused fire-temple to be built wherever he
“ came, that so the sacred fires might be the better
“ preserved, and the publick offices of their Religion
“ better performed before them, than it could be by al-
“ tars on tops of hills, where, by storms and tempests,
“ the fire was sometimes extinguished, and their offices
“ interrupted. Not that they worshipped the fire, (for
“ this they always disowned) but God in the fire. *Zo-
“ roastres*, among other his impostures, having feigned
“ that he was taken up into heaven, he pretended not,
“ as *Mahomet* after did, there to have seen God, but
“ only to have heard him speaking out of the midst of
“ a great and most bright flame of fire; and therefore
“ taught his followers, that fire was the truest *Shechinah*
“ of the Divine Presence, and ordered them still to di-
“ rect all their worship, first toward the Sun, which they
“ called *Mithra*, and next toward their sacred fires.
“ Hence, says our Author, the meaning of that text,
“ *Ezek. viii. 16.* is, that people had turned their backs
“ on the true worship of God, and had gone over to that
“ of the *Magians*.”

“ *Zoroastres* having thus retained, in his reformation of
“ *Magianism*, the ancient usage of that Sect in worship-
“ ping God before fire, to give the sacred fires in the
“ temples, which he had erected, the greater veneration,
“ he pretended he had brought some sacred fire from
“ heaven, when he was there, and placed it on the altar
“ of the first fire-temple he erected at *Xiz* in *Media*,
“ from whence they say it was propagated to all the
“ rest. For this reason their priests watch it day and
“ night, and never suffer it to go out; and they feed it,
“ with great superstition, only with wood stript of its
“ bark, as most clean, and never blow it with bellows,
“ or with their breath, for fear of polluting it. To cast
“ any unclean thing into it, was death by the law, when
“ those of that Sect reigned.——They mumbled
“ their prayers rather than spoke them, as the popish

“ priests do their masses, without letting the people ar-
 “ ticularly hear one word. Tho’ they should hear,
 “ they would not understand, since their publick prayers
 “ to this day are in the old *Persian* language, in which
 “ *Zoroastres* first composed them about 2200 years ago;
 “ and in this absurdity the *Romanists* partake with them.
 “ *Zoroastres*, to gain the greater reputation to his pre-
 “ tensions, retired to a cave, and there lived a long
 “ time as a recluse.—He removed from thence into
 “ *Bactria*, the most eastern province of *Persia*—and
 “ thence he went in person to *India*, among the *Brach-*
 “ *mans*; and having learned from them knowledge in
 “ mathematicks, astronomy, and natural philosophy,
 “ he returned and instructed his *Magians* in these arts.—
 “ He went next to the royal court at *Susa*, where he
 “ managed his pretensions with that craft, that *Darius*
 “ himself became a profelyte to his new Religion, whose
 “ example, in a short time, drew in the nobility and all
 “ the great men of the kingdom; and thus it became
 “ the national Religion of that country, and so con-
 “ tinued for many ages after, till this imposture was
 “ supplanted by that of *Mahomet*, raised by almost the
 “ same arts.—There is a remnant of these *Magians*
 “ still in *Persia* and *India*, who to this day observe the
 “ same Religion *Zoroastres* first taught them; for they
 “ still have his book, wherein their Religion is contain-
 “ ed, which they keep and reverence as the Christians do
 “ the Bible, and the *Mahometans* the *Alcoran*, making
 “ it the rule of their faith and manners. This book he
 “ composed while he lived retired in the cave. There
 “ are contained his pretended revelations. ’Tis called
 “ *Zendavesta*, and by contraction *Zend*; or, as the vul-
 “ gar pronounce it, *Zundavestow*, and *Zund*. The word
 “ originally signifieth a *fire-kindler*.——Dr. *Hyde*, late
 “ professor of the *Hebrew* and *Arabic* tongues at *Ox-*
 “ *ford*, being well skilled in the old *Persic*, as well as
 “ in the modern, offered to have published the whole
 “ book with a *Latin* Translation, could he have been
 “ supported in the expences of the edition. But for
 “ want of this, the design died with him. In this book are
 “ found

“ found a great many things taken out of the Old Testa-
“ ment. It inserts a great part of *David's* Psalms, gives
“ some account of the creation and deluge, tho' dis-
“ guised and mixed with many things of *Zoroastres's* own
“ invention. He commends *Abraham*, but pretends that
“ his own Religion is the same that *Abraham* professed.
“ He enjoins many things to be observed that are in the
“ *Levitical* law; only he takes away the law about in-
“ cest, as if nothing of this nature were unlawful. He
“ allows a man to marry not only his own sister or
“ daughter, but even his own mother. He that was
“ born of this worst sort of incest, was looked on as the
“ best qualified to be a priest among the *Magians*. This
“ is such an abomination, such a base piece of flattery,
“ as tho' other things had been right, yet 'tis enough to
“ pollute the whole book. The *Persian* kings being ex-
“ ceedingly given to such incestuous marriages, this
“ seems to have been contrived to flatter them in their
“ wickedness, and the better to engage and fix them to
“ this Sect. *Alexander the Great*, when he conquered
“ *Persia*, did, by a law, forbid such incestuous copula-
“ tions. *Zoroastres* having obtained this wonderful suc-
“ cess, did return to *Balch*, where, according to his
“ own institution, he was obliged to have his residence,
“ as *Archimagus*, or Head of the Sect, and there he
“ reigned in spirituals, with the same authority over the
“ whole empire, as the king did in temporals.—But
“ after his return to *Balch*, he enterprised upon *Argasp*
“ king of the oriental *Scythians*, who was a zealous *Sa-*
“ *bian*, to draw him over to his Religion; and backed
“ his attempt with the authority of *Darius*.——The
“ *Scythian* prince resented this with such indignation,
“ that he invaded *Bactria* with an army; and having
“ there defeated the forces of *Darius* that opposed him,
“ slew *Zoroastres*, with all the priests of his patriarchal
“ church, which amounted to the number of 80 persons,
“ and demolished all the fire-temples in that province.
“ This happened in the 35th year of the reign of *Darius*.”
This, and more on the same subject, has Dr. *Prideaux*,
from a book of *Thomas Hyde*, De Religione veterum
P 4 Persarum,

Perfarum, *Of the Religion of the ancient Persians*, and from several other authors.

I shall add a few other passages concerning the superstition of the *Persians*, in the period of time we are speaking of. *Q. Curtius*, giving an account of the march of *Darius's* army, says, *The fire, which they called eternal, was carried before them on silver altars: The Magi came after it singing hymns after the Persian manner; 365 youths clothed in scarlet followed, according to the number of the days of the year, as the Persians reckon it **. The same author brings in *Darius* conjuring his soldiers by the fire, as the principal Deity of their country: *I therefore conjure you*, says he, *by the gods of our country, by the eternal fire carried upon the altars, and by the shining of the sun which rises within my dominions, by the eternal memory of Cyrus, &c. †*. *Strabo* says ‖, *Among the Persians there are great inclosures called Πυραθῆα, in the midst whereof is an altar, upon which the Magi keep an immortal fire upon a heap of ashes. They go daily into the place to say certain prayers, which last about an hour. There they stand before the fire with a bundle of rods in their hands, and a mitre upon their heads; the strings whereof hang before and behind, and these before reach to their lips. This is practised in the temples of Anaitis and Amanus, who have there their temples; and the statue of Amanus is carried in pomp. This I am an eye-witness of. He also says, They had so great a respect to the fire, that if one had blown upon it, or thrown any dead thing or dirt into it, they were punished with the severest death. This furious zeal for their fire-temples continued even to the fourth or fifth century, after Christianity was received into the world. For Theodoret tells us ‡, “ That a certain bishop of Persia named Audas, from an indiscreet zeal, burnt one of these temples dedicated to the sacred fire called Πυρῆα. Isdigerdes king of Persia being informed by the Magians, commanded him at first only to rebuild it, which he refusing to do, the king threatened to demolish all the christian churches in his dominions, which he actually did, and ordered*

“ Audas

* *Curtius*, lib. 3. cap. 3. † *Lib. 4. cap. 14. pag. m. 82.*
 ‖ *Geogr. lib. 17.* ‡ *Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 39.*

“ *Audas* also to be killed ; yea, raised a cruel Persecution
“ against the Christians in *Persia*, which continued 30
“ years, and therein perished an incredible number of
“ Christians with unheard of torments.”

That horses were dedicated to the sun by the *Persians*,
yea sometimes sacrificed to him, is affirmed by many
ancient authors. *Q. Curtius*, when giving an account
of the march of *Darius's* army, says *, “ After this
“ came a chariot drawn with white horses, followed by
“ a horse of an extraordinary size, which they called
“ the horse of the sun. Those who led the horses wore
“ white garments, and had golden rods in their hands.”
Justin, who abridged the history of *Trogus Pompeius*,
says †, “ The *Persians* esteem the Sun as the only God, and
“ that horses are to be consecrated to him.” *Ovid* seems
to intimate, that horses are not only consecrated to
the Sun by the *Persians*, but also offered in sacrifice to
him ‖. *Plutarch* gives this account of the *Persian* super-
stition, “ This is the opinion of the greatest and wisest
“ part of mankind ; for some believe that there are two
“ Gods, as it were two rival workmen, the one whereof
“ they make to be the maker of good things, and the
“ other of bad ; and some call the better of these God,
“ and the other *Dæmon*, as does *Zoroastres* the *Magian*,
“ whom they report to be 5000 years elder than *Trojan*
“ times. [N. B. A gross mistake in *Chronology*, where the
Heathens commonly err, having no fixed standard about
ancient times.] “ This *Zoroastres* therefore called the one
“ of these *Oromazes*, and the other *Arimanius* ; and af-
“ firmed moreover, that the one of them did, of any
“ thing sensible, the most resemble light, and the other
“ darkness and ignorance ; but that *Mithras* was in the
“ middle betwixt them. For which cause the *Persians*
“ call *Mithras* the mediator. And they tell us that
“ he first taught mankind to make vows and offerings
“ of

* *Curtius*, lib. 3. cap. 3. † *Justini Hist.* lib. 1. cap. 10. Nam & solem
Persæ unum Deum esse credunt, & equos eidem Deo sacratos ferunt.

‖ *Fastorum*, lib. 1. ver. 355.

*Placat equo Persis radiis Hyperiona cinctum,
Ne detur celeri victima tarda Deo.*

“ of thanksgiving to the one, and to offer averting and
 “ feral sacrifice to the other *.” Finally, I shall add the
 testimony of *Herodote*; “ I have found, says he †,
 “ this to be the Religion of the *Persians*: They nei-
 “ ther build temples nor make statues, they set up no
 “ altars; yea, they account it madness to do so. This,
 “ in my opinion, is because they do not think, as the
 “ *Greeks*, that the Gods had their origin from among
 “ men. Their way is, to go to the top of the highest
 “ hills, and there to sacrifice victims to *Jupiter*; so they
 “ call the whole circuit of the heavens. They sacrifice
 “ to the sun, to the moon, to fire, water and winds;
 “ to these only they sacrificed from the beginning.”
Herodote has also this remarkable story concerning the
Persian superstition ||, “ *Cyrus* marching against *Babylon*,
 “ being stopt by the river *Gyndez*, that runs into *Ti-*
 “ *gris*, one of his white consecrated horses briskly en-
 “ tered the river, and was swallowed up, and drowned
 “ in a whirl-pool. *Cyrus* was so enraged at the river,
 “ as he threaten’d to make it so small, as women might
 “ go over it a foot; and for that end stopt his march
 “ a whole summer, and cut the river into 180 channels
 “ upon each side, and the next season he prosecuted
 “ his design against *Babylon*.”

To conclude; As to the horses or chariots of the sun,
 which *Josiah* took away, probably they were brought
 in among the *Jews* by *Manasseh*; no prince, that ever
 sat upon the throne of *Judah*, having carried the rebel-
 lion against God so far as he. For he sent almost into the
 remotest parts of the world for such abominations to fill
Israel with, and borrowed this of the *Persian*. The
 horses might be consecrated to the sun, tho’ not offered
 as sacrifices upon the altar. ’Tis also evident, that *Jo-*
siah in his reformation, put down the priests who burnt
 incense to *Baal*, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the
 planets, [in the Hebrew, to *Mazaloth*] and to all the host
 of heaven, 2 Kings xxiii. 5. It does not appear that in
 the times of the kings of *Judah*, these planets were wor-

wor-

* Plutarch, of Isis and Osiris. Engl. Edit. 1704. pag. 105.

† Herodot. lib. 1. cap. 131. || Lib. 1. cap. 189.

worshipped by the names they have had since. *Venus* was called *Helel*, the son of the morning, Isa. xiv. 12. and other planets and remarkable stars, by some other names; but they had not then the fables about the several constellations and stars, that were afterwards invented by the *Greeks* and *Romans*.

Beside the idolatry the *Jews* borrowed from their neighbours, they had some peculiar to themselves; as that of *Gideon's Ephod* in the book of *Judges*, Chap. viii. 22—29. The case seems to be this; *Gideon* having by God's command erected an altar in his own city *Ophrah*, *Judg.* vi. 24—26. for an extraordinary time and occasion, thought it might be continued for ordinary use; and therefore, as he intended to procure priests, so he designed to make priestly garments, especially an ephod, as the most costly, which, besides its use in sacred administrations, was also the instrument by which the mind of God was enquired and discovered, 1 *Sam.* xxx. 7. and might seem necessary for the judge to have at hand, that he might consult God upon all occasions. 'Tis not probable he made use of the whole 1700 shekels of gold, mentioned in the text for that use; for a shekel weighing four drachms, or half an ounce, if you reduce 1700 half ounces into pounds, allowing 16 ounces to the pound, the whole will amount to 53 pound, two ounces of gold, which would be too weighty a cloak for any priest's shoulders. Probably then he applied a part only of these shekels to make the Ephod, and other things appertaining to it, and reserved the remainder of this, and the other spoils, for the use of his own house, which from that time became a considerable family in *Israel*, till it ended in *Abimelech*. I see no occasion for *Jurieu's* conjecture *, that this Ephod was a military ensign or standard for the soldiers, for preserving the memory of the defeat of the *Midianites*; for the Ephod was only appointed for religious use. If it be enquired, how did *Israel* go a whoring after this Ephod, which became a snare to *Gideon* and to his house, *Judg.* viii. 27.

* Hist. des Dogmes, &c. pag. 734.

220 *Of Margemah and the Brazen Serpent.*

I answer with Mr. *Pool* on the text, That they committed superstition and idolatry with it, going thither to enquire the will of God, whereby they were drawn from the true Ephod appointed by God for this end, and which was to be worn by the high priest only. This became an occasion of sin and ruin to him and his house. Tho' *Gideon* was a good man, and did this with an honest mind, to set up religion in his own family, yet there were many sins in it. (1.) Superstition and will-worship, serving God by a device of his own, which was frequently forbidden by God. (2.) Presumption in wearing or causing other priests to wear this kind of Ephod, which was peculiar to the high priest. (3.) Transgression of a plain command of worshipping God ordinarily but at one place, and one altar, *Deut. xii. 5.* and withdrawing people from that place to another. (4.) Making a fearful schism or division among the people. (5.) Laying a stumbling-block, or an occasion of superstition and idolatry before them, whom he knew to be too prone to it.

Some authors find an idol mentioned in *Prov. xxvi. 8.* rendring the *Hebrew* word *Margemah*, *Acervum Mercurii*, * *Mercury's Heap*, tho' the *Chaldee* paraphrast, and very many modern interpreters find nothing of this in that text. I doubt if *Mercury's* name was known in the time of *Solomon*.

The Brazen Serpent became an object of idolatry to the *Jews*, and was therefore broken in pieces by *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings xviii. 4.* He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that *Moses* had made: for unto those days the children of *Israel* did burn incense to it; and he called it *Nehushtan*, that is, a piece of brass. It is not easy to determine when this idolatry began. Some conceive its commencement was in the time of the kings of *Judah*; others apprehend the *Israelites* worshipped it even in the time of the *Judges*, ever since they began to be idolaters. The form of a serpent, so odious to mankind, should have made them abhor this idolatry; but this

* *Selden de Diis Syris, syntagma 2. cap. 15. pag. m. 351.*

this could not hinder them, when they saw their neighbours worship their Gods in prodigious forms ; as *Molech* under the figure of a bull with hands ; *Dagon*, half a man, and half a fish ; *Baalberith*, under the figure of a woman with towers on her head ; *Beelzebub*, the God of *Accaron*, in a three-headed statue, a dog, a wolf, and a lion's head. The devil, to consecrate the form in which he seduced *Eve*, as it were to invalidate the first promise, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed*, did use all his efforts to turn mens superstition this way, notwithstanding their natural aversion to the worship of serpents. The Roman History tells us *, *That Rome being grievously afflicted with the pestilence, the Romans sent ambassadors to bring from Epidaurus to Rome, the sign of Æsculapius, which was a serpent, that went aboard of its own accord, in which it appeared to them that God dwelt. When the ship came to the isle in the Tiber, the God landing there of his own accord, a temple was consecrated to Esculapius.* Ovid also † gives a poetical account of it, That in that place *Æsculapius* is worshipped in a statue of a human figure, with a staff in his left hand, and a serpent about it.

The serpent was one of the most venerable symbols of Egyptian religion, and very famous among the Phenicians. *Eusebius* gives a full account of it, in the fragment he has from *Philo Biblius*, the translator of *Sanctioniathon*. He says ‖, *Taautus attributed some divinity to the nature of the dragon and serpents, and the Phenicians and Egyptians approved his opinion, for indeed these creatures abound much more in spirits than other Reptiles ; they have a fiery nature, and swiftness that cannot be expressed.—— Therefore 'tis looked on as holy, and comes into the mysteries.—— 'Tis immortal and resolves into itself ; for it cannot die a natural death, but must die by the violence of some blow. The Phenicians call it a good Dæmon, the Egyptians, Cneph, and give him a sparrow-hawk's head, the whole very like the figure of the Greek ☉. Their meaning is to represent the world by this circle, and the good Dæmon by the serpent*
in

* Tit. Livii epitome, lib. 11. † Ovid. Metamorph. lib. 15. fab. 50.
‖ De præp. Evang. lib. 1. cap. 10. pag. m. 40, 41. Edit. 1688.

in the midst of it. The *Genius's*, protectors of cities and countries, called tutelar Gods, were worshipped under the symbol of serpents. The figure of two serpents at the entry was a sign the place was consecrated to some hero or deity, according to *Persius**, *Away children, empty not your selves here, the place is sacred by the picture of two serpents.* Many other testimonies might be brought into the field to shew, that the devil affected to be worshipped in the form of a serpent all the world over. The story of *Bel* and the *Dragon*, in the last chapter of the apocryphal additions to *Daniel*, may confirm it. Dr. *Nichols* relates †, *That Sigismundus in his history of Muscovy declares, That the Samogithæ there worship a serpent, which they keep by them, and tells a story of a poor man that was horribly abused by the Devil for relinquishing the worship of his serpent.* The like *Gaguinus* in his *Sarmatia Europæa* tells of the *Lithuanians*, as also *Scaliger* in his *exercitationes*; and that they sacrifice to them milk and cocks. The like serpent-worship the same *Scaliger* relates of the people of *Calecut* in the *Indies*, in his notes upon *Aristotle's* book of animals. And *Philip Melancthon* tells a strange story of some priests somewhere in *Asia*, that carry about a serpent in a brazen vessel, which they attend with a great deal of musick and charms in verse: The serpent lifts up himself, and opens his mouth, and thrusts out the head of a beautiful virgin; the devil thereby glorying in this miscarriage among these poor idolaters. And some books of travels into the *West-Indies* give the like account there.

But I have insisted long enough upon the idolatry of the *Egyptians*, *Phenicians*, *Syrians*, *Israelites*, *Jews*, *Canaanites*, and other eastern nations. Only I hope what hath been said may in some measure give light to several passages of the *Sacred Scriptures*; may present us with a view of the lamentable condition of the *Gentile world*, who knew not the only living and true God; and hence we may infer the inestimable benefit of true *Christianity*, which

* *Satyr. 1. ver. 113.*

Pinge duos angues. Pueri, sacer est locus: extra Meite ———

† *Dr. Nichols's Conference with a Theist, pag. 200.*

which banishes this abominable idolatry, and discovers the only way to everlasting life.

One thing must be further remarked, That tho' the *Jews* were really most guilty of several kinds of idolatry, especially before the *Babylonish* captivity, as has been already declared, and for which the Lord in his justice punished them; yet the Heathens very unjustly charged them with some acts of idolatry of which they were innocent. The *Greeks*, and after them the *Romans* are the only ancient pagan writers, which are now remaining, except a few imperfect copied fragments. Now the *Greeks* themselves knew nothing of the *Jews*, till about the middle of the *Persian* monarchy, long after the captivity, and the restoration from *Babylon*. Since that time it does not appear that the *Jews* polluted themselves with heathenish idolatry, and therefore the *Gentiles* abhorred them. I have in the former chapter made use of the testimony of several ancient writers to confirm the authority of several facts related in the bible *, and taken notice of some of the fabulous reports of the Heathens against the *Jews*. I shall not now resume their testimonies at length. Only I observe, that *Justin*, as well as some other profane writers, says †, *The Jews were banished from Egypt for the scab*; which is nothing but the boils and blains inflicted on the *Egyptians* for refusing to let *Israel* go, *Exod. ix. 8—12*. Those sacred things of *Egypt*, which, he says, *Moses* stole away, are only the Jewels and precious things the *Israelites* borrowed from the *Egyptians* before their departure: And when the *Egyptians* sought to recover them, the tempests, by which, he says, they were obliged to return home, is the drowning of *Pharaoh* and his host in the red-sea, whereby they went to a fatal home.

Plutarch very unjustly accuses the *Jews* of observing *Bacchanals*, or rites in honour of *Bacchus* ‖, at the feast of tabernacles. But *Cornelius Tacitus* says more truly, That the rites of the *Jews* differ from other nations

* See Pag. 123, to 127. † Lib. 36. cap. 2. ‖ Symposiacs, Book 4. Quest. 5.

nations *. Yet the same author reproacheth them as guilty of worshipping the ass; for he says †, *When they came out of Egypt, nothing troubled them more than the want of water; when they happened to meet a great company of wild asses, Moses followed them, guessing that in the grass where they used to feed, there would be springs of water.* — The figure of an ass, says he, which stopt their wandring and shewed them the fountain of water, he consecrated to be worshipped in the holy place. This was also objected by Appion the Grammarian, and refuted long ago by Josephus, with many others of that kind. Josephus speaks thus ‡, “The Egyptians should not reproach us with calumnies of this kind. The ass is as good as the goats and other vile creatures they adore as deities. How can we be guilty in this matter, since we use still the same laws? Our city has been often oppressed with the fortune of war as well as others. Theos, Pompey the great, Licinius Crassus, and last of all Titus Cæsar entred our temple, and found nothing of that kind there, only pure religion. — Appion should have considered this, unless he had the heart of an ass, or the impudence of a dog, which his people use to worship. We ascribe no honour or power to asses, as the Egyptians do to serpents, and crocodiles, when they account those who are bitten by the serpents, or devoured by the Crocodiles, happy and worthy of God.” It is well known that when the Emperor Caius Caligula ordered the Jews to receive his statue into the temple, they refused; upon which he threatned a destructive war against them, which was prevented by the address of king Agrippa, and the embassy of Philo Judæus §. The Jews would rather lose their lives, than suffer any idolatrous image to be set up in their temple: so far were they from the worship of an ass, which indeed they are never charged with, but by the

* Hist. lib. 5. cap. 2. *Moses, quo sibi in posterum gentem firmaret, novos ritus contrariosque cæteris mortalibus indidit, profana illic omnia que apud nos sacra, &c.*

† Ibid. — *Effigiem animalis, quo monstrante errorem sitimque depulerant, penetrati sacravere.* || Contra Appionem, lib. 2,

‡ Joseph. Antiq. lib. 18. cap. 10, 11. Philo Judæus Legat. ad Caium,

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the calumnies of their adversaries. And no less absurd is the calumny of *Petronius* *, who charges them with worshipping a swine.

Leaving the Eastern nations, 'tis proper now to move to the West, and consider the idolatry of the *Greeks*, *Romans*, and other western nations, before the coming of Christ. In the entry upon this subject, I shall offer some general remarks, which may give some light to this whole affair. *First*, Nothing can be more monstrous than the idolatry of the *Greeks* and *Romans*. 'Tis well known all the world over, 'tis contained in their books, in their poets and classics, which are in the hands even of children. There we meet with an incredible number of Gods. *Hesiod* reckons no less than three myriads, or thirty thousand of them †. *Varro*, cited by *Augustine*, has the same number of them ‡. Every thing had its peculiar deity, the cities, fields, houses, families, edifices, gates, nuptial chambers, marriages, births, deaths, sepulchres, wheat, trees, gardens, the heavens, the earth, rivers, fountains, woods, the sea, and hell itself: every thing was made up of Gods. *2dly*, Among these there were many guilty of abominable crimes, of adultery, sodomy, rape, and all manner of debauchery. *Cicero* owns this ||, *That the most absurd things*

* *Judaus licet & porcinum numen adoret.*

† *Εργων* lib. 1. ver. 252.

Τρεῖς γὰρ μυρία εἰσὶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πελυβοτείρῃ
Ἀθάνατοι ζῆνδος, φύλακες θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων.
Οἱ ῥα φυλάσσεσιν τε δίκας καὶ χεῖλια ἔργα.

The same in English.

Three Myriads of immortal Gods there be
Upon the fruitful Earth, of *Jove's* great Progeny;
Who Mortals keep, the Laws observe, and wicked Works do see.

‡ *De Civitate Dei*, lib. 4. cap. 5, 6.

|| *Cicero de Natura Deorum*, lib. 1. §. 42. *Nec enim multò absurdiora sunt ea, quæ poetarum vocibus fusa, ipsâ suavitatē nocuerunt: quæ irâ inflammatos, & libidine furentes, induxerunt Deos: feceruntque ut eorum bella, pugnas, prælia, vulnera videremus: odia præterea, dissidia, discordias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omnī intemperantiâ libidines, adulteria, vincula, cum humano genere concubitus, mortalesque ex immortalī procreatos.*

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things are said by the poets, which do harm even by the pleasantness of their style: for they have introduced Gods inflamed with anger, mad with lust, and have made us see their wars, battles, fightings, wounds, their hatred, differences, strivings, their births, deaths, complaints, lamentations, their lusts exceeding in every kind of intemperance; their adulteries, fetters, their lying with mankind, and mortals begotten of immortal Gods.

Thirdly, Tho' the Greeks and Romans suppose their Gods eternal and immortal; yet there was not one of them but had their fathers, mothers, their genealogy, their birth, and in short the circumstances of their whole life published to the world. Thus *Jupiter*, the chief of their deities, was the Son of *Saturn*, as *Saturn* was of *Cælus*. Yea, there were tombs erected for the greatest part of them. We are told of one *Euhemerus*, a native of *Messina* in *Sicily*, who published the birth and death of all the Gods, taken from authentic inscriptions found in the heathen temples. There was a large extract of that book of *Euhemerus* in the sixth book of *Diodorus Siculus*; but that's also now wanting. Perhaps the heathen priests, jealous of their reputation, did suppress this treatise, by castrating the work of *Diodorus*, and leaving out five books, from the end of the fifth to the beginning of the eleventh. Only there is a fragment thereof transmitted to us by *Eusebius* *. The primitive fathers have not been wanting to make use of his authority to prove the heathen Gods to have been no more than dead men †. The Heathens themselves look on *Euhemerus* with a different aspect: *Sextus Empiricus* calls him an atheist, and an impious man, and puts him in the same rank with *Diagoras* and *Theodores*. *Plutarch* in his book of *Isis* and *Osiris*, says, *Euhemerus the Messinese has been the author of those fables he has thought fit to divulge, they not being founded on the least probability of truth. Cicero* says ‡, *As to those who say; strong, famous or powerful men after their death came to be Gods, and that these are the*

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* De Præp. Evang. lib. 2. cap. 2.

† Augustin. de Civ. Dei, lib. 4. cap. 7.

‡ De natura Deorum, lib. 1. §. 119. or near the End of that Book.

the same which we worship and pray to, with the highest veneration, are they not void of all religion? Which method was chiefly gone into by Euhemerus, whom our countryman Ennius, beside others, has translated and followed. For by Euhemerus the deaths and burials of the Gods are demonstrated; and therefore 'tis to be doubted if he has confirmed religion, or altogether taken it away. But Ennius had a more favourable sentiment of him, because he not only embraced his opinion, but also translated his history of the Gods into Latin; as appears from that testimony of Cicero we have just now cited, and by Lactantius, who says the same*. It seems surprising that the Pagan writers should be so incensed against Euhemerus, for giving account of the lives of their Gods, who were but men; when the *Theogony* of Hesiod, the works of Homer, and generally of all the poets, does narrate their births, lives, and genealogies, which cannot be appropriated to any thing else but men. Manilius assures us †, That the poets by their verses have turned the whole heavens into a fable. And Cicero himself, who is so angry with Euhemerus, does confess ‡, That the whole heavens are filled with mankind; that if we search into ancient things, and into what the writers in Greece have recorded, we may find that the very chief deities, the *majorum gentium Dii*, have gone from this earth unto heaven; their sepulchres are shown in Greece, which they who are initiated into these mysteries ought to remember. Alexander the Great wrote out of Egypt to his mother, that even the Gods of the higher rank, Jupiter, Juno, Saturn, &c. were men, and that this secret was laid open to him by Leo the great priest of the sacred things in Egypt, desiring the letter to be burnt after it revealed this to her ||. But I shall speak afterward of the absurdities of heathenism in a chapter by itself.

Q 2

Fourthly,

* De falsa religione, lib. 1. cap. 11.

† Astronomicon, lib. 2. ver. 37.

Quorum carminibus nihil est nisi fabula cælum.‡ Tusc. quæst. lib. 1. §. 28, 29. *Totum prope cælum nonne humano genere completum est?*

|| Apud Augustin. de Civ. Dei, lib. 8. cap. 5.

Fourthly, I remark that the *Greeks*, and after them the *Romans*, borrowed a great part, not only of their learning, but also of their superstition, from the *Egyptians* and other eastern nations. Beside what has been already observed *, we may further take notice, that *Abraham*, and some of the Patriarchs, especially *Joseph*, having occasion to reside some time in *Egypt*, did probably leave some tincture of divine truths among them, which, by frequent commerce with the *Jews*, they might, if they so inclined, further improve; especially after the bible was translated by the LXX Interpreters, and laid up in the *Alexandrian* library, in the reign of *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*. *Plato*, the famous *Athenian* philosopher, who came nearest to the truth in divine matters of any of the heathen, having in his travels to the East conversed with the *Jews*, for the improvement of his knowledge †, and got some insight into the writings of *Moses*, and the other sacred books, he learned many things from them, which others of his profession could not attain to; and therefore he is said by *Numenius* ‡ to be none other than *Moses speaking Greek*.

But of people, especially those who live without God in the world, are more ready to learn evil than good: and it seems pretty plain from the *Greek* heathenish authors, which I shall name, that they learned much of their idolatry and superstition, with the fables about it, from the East. *Diodorus Siculus*, who wrote in the time of *Julius* and *Augustus Cæsars* at *Rome*, and travelled over a great part of the world, especially *Egypt*, to make his history more compleat and exact, and therefore may be credited that he would not lye to the prejudice of his own cause, says ||, *The priests of Egypt tell in their sacred commentaries, that Orpheus, Musæus, Melampus, Dædalus, the Poet Homer, Lycurgus the Spartan, Solon the Athenian, Plato the Philosopher, Pythagoras the Samian, Eudoxus the Mathematician, Democritus the Abderite, and Oenopides Chius came to them; they give Signs of the whole by images and names,*
taken

* See Pag. 49. † *Josephus contra Appionem*, lib. 2.

‡ *Suidas in Νεμπιϑ*. *Clemens Alexandr. Strom.* 1.

|| *Bibl. Hist.* lib. 1. cap. 96.

taken from works and places, and demonstrations from each of their professions, whereby they prove that all those things for which the Greeks were remarkable, were borrowed from Egypt. Orpheus took all his mystical rites, and the Orgia or Feasts celebrated about them, from thence, and his whole fable about hell, the ceremonies of initiation to Osiris and Bacchus are the same; and those of Isis and Ceres, tho' they differ in name, yet they plainly agree. Many other proofs of this assertion Diodorus gives, even to the end of his first book. Herodote is of the same opinion. Plutarch contradicts him, upon this slender reason, That neither Homer, Hesiod nor Pindar, nor some other ancient poets mention it *. Yet in my opinion the same Plutarch, in another place, goes into the same sentiments; for he says †, So great was the piety of the Egyptian philosophy about things divine, which is also confirmed by the most learned among the Greeks, as Solon, Thales, Plato, Eudoxus, and as some say, even Lycurgus, going to Egypt, and conversing with the priests, of which they say that Eudoxus was the auditor of Chonupheus the priest of Memphis, Solon of Sonchis priest of Sais, and Pythagoras of Oenupheus priest of Heliopolis. 'Tis also highly probable, that Greece, being inhabited by Colonies from diverse nations, did borrow from every one of these some part of their religious ceremonies. The Thebans being descended from the Phenicians, retained a great part of their superstition, and the Argives are thought to have been instructed in the Egyptian religion by Danaus and his successors; beside several kinds of superstition their great men learned by travels and commerce into other nations. So afraid were the Athenians of neglecting any ceremony they had heard of, that the Apostle Paul tells us, they had erected an altar to an unknown God.

Fifthly, The wiser sort of the heathens being ashamed of the extravagant absurdities in their religion, have contrived many ways to palliate the matter. They alledge three sorts of divinity, μυθικὴ, φυσικὴ, and πολιτικὴ, that

Q 3

is,

* Of the malice of Herodote.

† Of Isis and Osiris, in his Morals, pag. m. 1291.

is, *fabulous, physical and political*. The first is the divinity of their poets, the second of their philosophers, and the third of their priests. The *first*, as it is monstrous and abominable, is rejected by the wisest of the heathen. *Varro* owns*, *that they ascribe such things to the Gods, as are not to be said of the vilest men*. The *second* sort is the divinity of the philosophers, which tho' *Varro* did not altogether disapprove, yet he represents it as dangerous, and would have it confined to schools, because they take a liberty of disputing concerning the nature of the Gods, and contradict many things received for undeniable truths among the people. The *third* sort of their divinity was that used among the priests and the people, according to their worship received and practised in their temples. The wiser sort of the heathens have laboured hard to retrench that part of the divinity of the poets, which appeared so abominable to the world, they having represented their fictions in base shapes. *Cicero* loudly complains of it†, saying, *Their way of contriving feigned Gods had begotten false opinions, turbulent errors and superstitions, like old wives fables; for the figure of their Gods, their age, cloathing and dressing are made known; their alliances, marriages, affinities, and every thing resembling human weakness. For they are brought in as men disturbed by passion; we hear of their lusts, sickness, anger; yea, as the fables tell us, the Gods have not wanted wars and battles, not only in Homer, where the Gods defended armies contrary to one another, but also they have had their own wars with the Titans and Giants. These things, says he, are both foolishly said and believed, and are full of levity and madness. But the excuse is frivolous; there is no difference between their best divinity and that of the poets. The Gods of the poets were the very same, in honour of whom the Greeks and Romans built temples; their worship and service, their mysteries, their scenick games celebrated to their memory, their feasts, &c. all these were founded on the fables of the poets, and the representations they made of the Gods. The mysterious rites of Ceres, for instance,*
at

* Apud Augustinum de Civitate Dei, lib. 6. cap. 5.

† De Natura Deorum, lib. 2. §. 70. — Hæc & creduntur & dicuntur stultissime, & plena sunt futilitatis & summa levitatis.

at which none but women were to be present, had their foundation in what had been said by the poets of the rape of *Proserpine* by *Pluto*. The priests of the Goddess *Cybele* were eunuchs, by reason of the story of the amours of *Cybele* with *Atys*, and the hard fate that happened to that young man, to have his genitals cut off by the jealous Goddesses. St. *Austin*, in his books *de civitate Dei*, gives a hundred instances of that kind, to shew the divinity of the poets, that exposed the Heathens to the resentment of the Christians, was the same that was practised in their Temples, and maintained in their Religion.

They made use of another pretence for palliating the enormity of their divinity, that their physiology, or natural philosophy, lay couched under that veil, and that *Orpheus*, *Linus*, *Hesiod*, and *Homer*, did represent the affairs of nature under these riddles. Thus *Plutarch* explained whatever he judged enormous in the divinity of the *Egyptians* †. But this does not justify the monstrous tenets of the Heathen; for instead of meeting with one thing, the true sense whereof may be applicable to some natural Phænomenon, there are an hundred that will not admit of such an interpretation. I would ask by what kind of allegory they can explain all we meet with in the poets, concerning the genealogies of their Gods, their Adulteries, Incests, Rapes, Drunkenness, Insolence, and a thousand things of that kind?

For further justifying the heathen theology, 'tis alledged, that in effect the heathens owned no more but one God, all their different deities being only the attributes and actions of one and the same. The divine virtue extended all over the universe, is called *Jupiter* in Heaven, *Juno* in the Air, *Neptune* in the Sea, *Cybele* on the Earth, and *Pluto* in the subterranean Parts. Many passages in the writings of the Heathen may prove them to have acknowledged no more than one God. *Clemens of Alexandria* advances *, among many others, a passage

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of

† Treatise of *Isis* and *Osiris*.

* Stromatum lib. 6.

of Sophocles, cited by *Hecatæus* the *Abderite*, who wrote a history of the *Jews* that's now lost, where the unity of God is expressed in very convincing terms. He says, *Certainly there is only one God, who has made heaven and earth, the tempestuous sea, and turbulent winds: But we miserable mortals have turned away our hearts, by erecting statues to the Gods, of stone, brass, gold, and ivory, to whom we sacrifice, and consecrate festival days; there is the whole aim of our piety.* In the same book he quotes a passage out of *Xenophanes* the *Colophonian*, saying, *The sovereign God of us, and of them in heaven, is one, bearing resemblance to mankind, either in body or in mind.* *Lactantius* says, *Pythagoras unum Deum confitetur, dicens incorporalem esse mentem*†; i.e. *Pythagoras* confesses there is one God, whose mind is incorporeal or spiritual. The same author says, that *Pythagoras* gives this definition of a Deity; *God is a spirit, diffused and passing through the whole of nature, and all parts of the world, from whom all creatures have their life*‡. *Virgil* speaks to the same purpose||, and *Cicero* expresses his thoughts thus[*]; *We cannot conceive of God otherwise, than of a mind that is loose and free from all composition with mortals, perceiving and moving all things.* These authors had certainly some notion of the unity of God. *Plato* frequently calls God[+] τὸ ὄν, the One-Being, and δημιουργός, the Creator of the world; and says, this one Being is the supreme governor of men, and the sovereign of all those called inferior Gods. *Socrates*, *Plato's* master, was put to death, for having scoffed at the heathen Gods: yet the *Delphic Oracle* declared him the wisest of mankind. The same doctrine was taught by *Proclus*, *Jamblichus*, *Hierocles*, and other *Platonics*, in the first ages of the Christian Church:

† De ira Dei, cap. 11. operum pag. m. 704.

‡ De falsa religione, lib. 1. cap. 5. operum Lactantii, pag. m. 20.

|| Georg. lib. 4. ver. 221, &c.

— Deum namque ire per omnes

Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum.

Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,

Quemque sibiennes nascentem arcessere vitas.

[*] De consolatione.

[+] In Parmenide, in Timæo, in Epimenide, &c.

Church: But they were of the Christian School at *Alexandria*, where they had sucked in some of these first principles of Religion with their philosophy, as has been formerly proved*. *Seneca* also says, *That the several names appropriated to the Deities, were only different names of the same God, using his power in different ways*†. What *Plutarch* says concerning *Thebes*, a city of *Egypt*, is remarkable‡, *That all Egypt paid a certain tax, laid on by the priests to defray the charges expended upon the images of those creatures, that were worshipped in their temples; but the Thebans would not pay that tribute, because it was their opinion, that nothing but what was immortal could be a God.* The inscription also that he speaks of, that was upon the statue of *Minerva* at *Sais*, deserves our notice||, *I am every thing that has been, that is now, and ever will be.* And any body, who with attention reads that treatise in *Plutarch's* morals, entitled, *What signifies the word εἰς, engraven over the temple at Delphi?* will find frequent assertions, *That God is one; that he alone is; that he never had a beginning by generation, nor will have an end by corruption.* Εἰ ἐν, *thou art one, God alone is, εἰς, that is to say, thou art, giving a good testimony in his behalf, that in him there is never any change or mutation, &c.* This entirely destroys the plurality of Gods. The words of *Pliny* against images of the Deity, and the plurality of Gods, are very plain: you have them at the foot of the page [*].

After all these proofs, and others that might be adduced, there remains no ground to doubt but some of the Heathens had a little knowledge of the unity of God. Which truth discovered its lustre even amidst these dark times,

* See pag. 49.

† De beneficiis, lib. 4. cap. 8. operum pag. m. 33.

‡ Of *Isis* and *Osiris*.

|| Ibidem.

[*] *Naturalis Hist. lib. 2. cap. 7. Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque querere, imbecillitatis humana reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) & quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus visus, totus auditus, totus anima, totus animi, totus sui. Innumeros quidem credere atque etiam ex virtutibus vitiisque hominum, ut Pudicitiam, Concordiam, Mentem, Spem, Honorem, Clementiam, Fidem, aut (ut Democrito placuit) duos omnino, Pœnam & Beneficium, majorem ad socordiam accedit.*

times, and is a proof of the truth of the Christian Religion, and that the fundamental principles thereof are agreeable to the light of nature; but is of no weight to justify the divinity of the Heathen. For this point was confined to a small number of the wiser sort, who had improved reason beyond the vulgar, and searched the true nature of things, and were therefore sensible of the absurdities of their Religion, concerning the multiplicity of Gods. But the devotion of the generality did, in effect, extend to all the superstitious Deities; and since they made Gods of the World, and its several parts, the Sun, Moon, Earth, and Elements, they did also worship them as distinct Deities; for the Sun cannot be the Moon or the Earth. I shall afterward more particularly discover the vanity and wickedness of the Heathenish Religion: what has been said, is sufficient at this time.

These things being premised, I may discourse more briefly of the Idolatry of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, since any body who pleases may have an account of it by the ancient *Mythic* writers, *Palæphatus*, *Phornutus*, *Apollodorus*, &c. and by abundance of modern authors, who have wrote the *Greek* and *Roman* antiquities.

Tho' the number of the Deities worshipped in *Greece* was incredible, (we have already heard that * *Hesiod* reckons three *Myriads*, or 30000 of them) yet they owned but twelve principal Gods, viz. *Jupiter*, *Saturn*, *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, *Mars*, *Minerva*, *Diana*, *Venus*, *Juno*, *Ceres*, *Mercurius*, and *Vulcan*. Hence their altar was called Βωμὸς τῶν δωδεκά θεῶν, the *Altar of the twelve Gods*. Indeed *Neptune*, *Pluto*, *Proserpina*, and some others, were of no less esteem among them. These Deities they worshipped, and by them they used to swear. They made also Gods of the passions, of accidents, and several creatures.

Their chief God, or rather Idol, was *Jupiter*, whom they called father and king of Gods; him they owned as their deliverer, counsellor, and defender of their towns: yet their poet *Homer* describes him as an adulterer, makes

* See pag. 229.

makes him undergo hardships, to be bound till *Thetis* loosed him, to be false in his promises to *Agamemnon*, a laughing-stock to *Juno* and *Minerva*, a slave to lust, and subject to sleep.

Saturn was a cruel God, who devoured his children, and could not be pacified but by sacrificing infants. In honour of him they kept a feast called *Κρονία*, or *Saturnalia*, as did afterwards the *Romans*. They worshipped him bare-headed, but other Deities with their heads covered. He was bound by *Jupiter* for injustice, and thrust down to hell; yet they held his government happy, and that under him was the golden age. He found out the use of the scythe or pruning-hook, with which he was painted. He taught the *Italians* husbandry: hence *Italy* was called *Saturnia*, the land of *Saturn*.

Another Deity of theirs was *Bacchus*, or *Liber*, called by the *Greeks* *Lyæus*, *Dionysius*, *Bromius*, &c. He was sometimes represented as a man, sometimes as a bull, sometimes as a goat, to shew the different disposition of drunkards. They called him *διςγενος*, twice born, first of *Semele*, then of *Jupiter*. He was crowned with ivy, his Feasts or *Bacchanals* were full of disorder, riot, immodesty, and madness.

A fourth Deity was *Apollo*, *Phæbus*, or the Sun. They made him God of shepherds, they armed him with a silver bow, and therefore *Homer* calls him *ἀργυρότοξος*. They made him the author of divinations. His oracles were famous every where. They that died suddenly, were said to be killed by him. They made him preside over musick and physick; and therefore he was called *Ἀλεξίκακος* and *Ἀποτρόπαιος*, that is, *deliverer from evil*. He had a rich temple at *Delphos*, beautified with a great deal of gold, and therefore called by *Pindar* *πολύχρυσος*, and from his golden bow he was named *χρυσότοξος*. He superintended the citharon, and *Mercury* the harp: they were both worshipped at one altar.

Their fifth Deity was *Mars* the God of war. For his hard heart, his armour, and brazen face, he was called by the *Greeks* *χάλκεος*. He was the swiftest of the heathen Gods, yet was over-reached by *Vulcan* the slowest;

to let us see that strength is oft overcome by policy. He had his intrigues with *Venus*: military men have their own amours. He is joined with *Minerva*: arts and arms do meet together. He was a great God among the *Greeks*, and greater among the *Romans*. To him they consecrated feasts and divers temples, not only as their tutelar God, but as father of *Romulus* their founder. He is called by the poets inconstant, mutable, false, treacherous. Miserable is the country where he reigns: his greatest enemies are *Jupiter* and *Minerva*, peaceable princes, and wise counsellors.

Minerva was the chief Goddess of *Athens*. Her festivals were called *Panathenæa*, and her chief temple *Panthenium*, or *Panathenæum*. From her perpetual celibacy, she was called Παρθένος, a *Virgin*. She has the next place to *Jupiter*, and wears his arms the *Ægis*, to shew that kings should not be without wise men about them. When she came out of *Jupiter*'s brain, she made a noise, brandishing her spear, as the fable says, at which mortals were afraid. She had her *Palladium* at *Athens*, as well as at *Troy*, and at *Rome* several temples.

Diana was the sister of *Apollo*: she was worshipped by the *Greeks* in the habit of a woman, armed with bow and arrows, and also by the *Romans*. To her they erected temples, the chiefest whereof was on the *Aventine* hill. She is called by *Pindar* ἵπποσώα, the *horse-driver*. By her they understood the *Moon*, to which they assigned horses, to signify her motion. She had also a golden chariot drawn by white hinds. She was represented with a torch in her hand, as *Hecate* is always, because she and *Hecate* are all one, and she was also the same with *Proserpine*, and is called *Triformis*, from the *Moon*'s three different lights. She was a cruel Goddess, who would not be satisfied without human victims. In *Arcadia* she was covered with a hind's skin, with a torch in one hand, and two serpents in the other, and on her shoulders a bow and quiver.

Venus was the Goddess of love and pleasures, because of her extraordinary beauty. Her chariot was drawn by swans and pidgeons, lascivious birds. She was adored

red at *Amathus*, *Cythera*, and *Paphos*, pleasant mountains in the isle of *Cyprus*, whence she is designed. *Tacitus** hath a fine description of her temple at *Paphos*. She had several children, as *Hymenæus*, the God of marriages. The three *Graces* were her daughters that kept her company. She was mother of two *Cupids*, Gods of love; the one was honest, the other presided over unlawful pleasures. He had wings on his back, and a quiver full of sharp burning arrows. The infamous *Priapus* owned her for his mother. She was had in honour as much at *Rome* as in *Greece*, as being the mother of *Æneas*, from whom the *Romans* deduced their original; and therefore they honoured her with many temples, and she was worshipped chiefly by the women. She was crowned with myrtle and roses; and the fable says, she was begot of sea-froth. All these do express the qualities of love.

Mercury was also adored by the *Greeks*. Him they called the son of *Jupiter* and *Maia*, daughter of *Atlas*, who bears up the heavens with his shoulders. He was said to be born in the mountain *Cyllene* in *Arcadia*. His ordinary office was ambassador and interpreter of the Gods. In this quality he had wings at his heels, and at his head, and in his hand a *Caduceus*, which was a rod with two serpents twisting their tails about it, in token of peace and amity. 'Tis conceived by some†, that *Mercury* is the discourse which interprets our mind and thought; it flies as he did. He had one son by *Venus* his sister: the child was said to be an hermaphrodite; who, as the fable says, happened to meet with the nymph *Salmacis* at a fountain, and the Gods, at her earnest request, made of their bodies but one, in such a manner, as both sexes were preserved intire. By this the poets give us to understand the union that should be between married persons; they ought to be one body and one heart. *Mercury* was worshipped as the God of music and merchandising. He had the charge of wrestlers, and was called *Ἐραστήριος*. He was said to keep the

* *Tacitus Hist. lib. 2. cap. 3.*

† *Galtruchius's History of the Heathen Gods, pag. 48.*

the doors from thieves, and was therefore called Προ-
 πύλαιος, and from the invention of four useful arts was
 called τετράγωνος, *four square*; so was his statue. He
 was a notable thief; he stole from *Jupiter*, his scepter;
 from *Neptune*, his trident; from *Mars*, his sword; and
 from *Vulcan*, his tongs. Some very learned Men have
 found great mysteries in this *Mercury*. *Huetius* makes
 him the same with *Moses**. No wonder, for he makes
 almost all the heathen fables to signify *Moses*. *Bochart*
 holds him to be *Canaan* the son of *Cham*†. *Hulsius*
 compares him with *Melchisedeck*, or with *Enoch* trans-
 lated to heaven‖. And *Peter Van Sarn*‡ has a learned
 dissertation, where he compares *Mercury* with what is
 written of the angel of the covenant in the Old Testa-
 ment. For my part, I am out of conceit with these far-
 fetched resemblances, and am particularly displeased
 with the last. I am humbly of opinion, that learned
 men may bestow their time and pains to better purpose,
 than to compare what the Scriptures say of the Son of
 God, with that which the fables of the heathens say con-
 cerning the Devil.

Vulcan, the son of *Jupiter* and *Juno*, was another of
 their Deities. He, for his deformity, was kicked out of
 heaven, and falling into the isle of *Lemnos*, he became
 lame, and was there nourished by *Eurymone*, the daugh-
 ter of *Oceanus* and *Tethys*. In this isle 'tis said he had his
 shop. The *Cyclops* were his servants. There he is said to
 make thunder-bolts for *Jupiter*, and arms for the Gods
 when they fought against the giants. He married *Venus*:
 when he found her guilty of adultery with *Mars*, he tied
 both together with iron chains, and made the Gods laugh
 at them. He was worshipped in the form of a lame man,
 with a blue cap; to signify the fire, whereof he was
 God. In his sacrifices a torch was lighted, and delivered
 from one to another; to signify, says *Alexander Ross***,
 the

* *Demon. Evang. Prop. 4. cap. 4. §. 2.* † *Phaleg. lib. 1. cap. 2.*

‖ *Pag. 213, 215.*—

‡ *Bibliotheca Historico-Philologico-Theologica, Classis quintæ fasci-
 culus primus, pag. 203, ad 212. Printed 1721.*

** *Pansebeia, pag. 139.*

the torch of our life is imparted from father to son by generation. At *Rome*, *Romulus* built his temple without the city, because *Mars* his co-rival had a temple within the same.

Juno, according to the poets, was the daughter of *Saturn* and *Ops*, the sister and wife of *Jupiter*, the Goddess of kingdoms and riches, having command over marriages and child-bearing, and therefore was called *Pronuba*, and *Lucina*. She brought forth *Hebe*, Goddess of youth, and advanced her so far into favour with *Jupiter*, that she always poured forth to him nectar to drink, 'till dispatched by *Ganymedes*. She was offended with *Jupiter*, when he brought forth *Minerva* out of his own brain, without her assistance. She entertained in her service a fellow full of eyes, called *Argus*, to observe and relate to her the base actions of her husband. When part of *Argus's* eyes were fast asleep, the rest were awake. *Jupiter* being displeased with this watchful spy, sent *Mercury* to lull him asleep with his pipe, and kill him; as he did. *Juno* grieved at this, changed her dead servant into a peacock, as the fable says, which shews yet in its feathers the great number of *Argus's* eyes. This Goddess was worshipped at *Corinth* in the habit of a queen, with a crown on her head, on which were carved the *Graces* and the *Hours*. She sat on a throne of gold and white ivory, having in one hand a pomegranate, and in the other a scepter, with an owl on the top of it. In some *Grecian* temples her image was drawn by peacocks. At *Argos* she was worshipped with vine-branches about her, treading on a lion's skin, in contempt of *Bacchus* and *Hercules*, *Jupiter's* two bastards. Her sacrifices in *Greece* were hecatombs. At *Rome* she was honoured with divers names, temples, and sacrifices. The calends of every month were dedicated to her, and her solemnities kept in *February*.

Ceres, another daughter of *Saturn* and *Ops*, desirous to find her daughter, whom *Pluto* took away, lighted two torches upon mount *Ætna*, resolving to seek her night and day through all the earth, and coming to King *Eleusis's* court in *Attica*, and having offered to nurse
his

his son *Triptolemus*; to render him immortal, she fed him in the day-time with divine milk, and in the night-time hid him in the fire. The king watching her one night, observed her putting his child into the fire, and cried out to his own ruin; for the Goddess, enraged at his curiosity, put him immediately to death. But as for *Triptolemus*, she learned him to till the earth and sow corn; and placing him in a chariot drawn with winged serpents, sent him over the world to teach men husbandry. *Ovid* says *, “ That *Ceres* was the first that tilled
 “ the ground, and furnished men with corn for their
 “ food, and by good laws learned them justice, and
 “ the manner to live in society. *He adds*, That *Ceres*
 “ being obliged to return to *Sicily*, the nymph *Arethusa*
 “ acquainted her that *Pluto* had taken away her
 “ daughter *Proserpina*. Whereupon she obtained of
 “ *Jupiter*, that her daughter should be restored, pro-
 “ vided she had eaten nothing in hell. But *Ascalaphus*
 “ (son of *Acheron*, and *Orphne* one of the infernal
 “ nymphs) informed that he had seen *Proserpina* gather
 “ a pomegranate in *Pluto*’s gardens, and suck seven of
 “ the grains; which so offended *Ceres*, that she changed
 “ him into an owl, the messenger of ill news. Finally,
 “ *Jupiter*, to comfort his sister, agreed that she might
 “ enjoy her daughter six months in heaven, and that
 “ she should be the other six with her husband in hell.”
Pausanias makes mention † of an altar, “ where the
 “ fruit of trees, honey, wool, and other things of this
 “ kind were offered to her, but never any wine.” *Virgil* ||
 seems to take *Bacchus* for the Sun, and *Ceres* for the
 Moon. Others take *Ceres* for the Earth. She was re-
 presented in a chariot drawn by dragons, holding pea-
 cock-heads in one hand, and a burning torch in the
 other, with a tress of corn upon her head. The secret
 or mystical sacrifices of *Ceres*, called *Eleusinia sacra*, were
 not

* *Ovid. Metamorph. lib. 5. fab. 6, 7, 8.*† In *Arcadicis*.|| *Georg. lib. 1. ver. 5, 6, 7.*———*Vos, ô clarissima mundi**Lumina, labentem cælo quæ ducitis annum,**Liber & alma Ceres.*———

not to be divulged; profane persons, as then called, were not admitted to them; the priest going before, uttered these words, ἐκάς ἐκάς ὅστις ἀλιτρός. The Roman priests proclaimed the same in their language, *Procul, O procul este profani**! The Arcadians did honour *Ceres* and *Proserpina*, by keeping fires continually burning in their temples. She was worshipped at *Rome*, as well as in *Greece*, where she had her priests and temples, and great solemnities in *April*, called *Ludi Cereales*.

Beside these already named, the *Greeks* worshipped many other fabulous deities; as *Æsculapius* for physic, and *Hercules*, whose twelve labours are famous among the poets. *Julian*, called the apostate, says of him †, *Hercules, when he is now gone wholly to his father Jupiter, can more easily take care of our affairs, than when he was clothed with flesh, and educated among men.* *Pan* was the god of shepherds. They had a great number of deities of the earth, as *Vesta*, *Ops*, *Cybele*, *Rhea*, *Tellus*, *Pales*, *Flora*, *Fauna*, *Proserpina*, &c. and of the sea, as *Neptune* the brother of *Jupiter*, called by the *Greeks* Ποσειδών, who being driven out of heaven for conspiring against *Jupiter*, is said by the poets to have built the walls of *Troy*, and to have had a contest with *Minerva* about giving a name to the city of *Athens*. Striking the ground with his trident in anger, a horse came forth, for which reason they offer'd him that animal. With him were *Nereus*, *Glaucus*, *Proteus*, *Triton*, *Oceanus*, *Thetis*, and other deities of the sea. *Pluto*, another brother of *Jupiter*, had hell for his share; he was represented in a chariot drawn by four black horses, with a bunch of keys in his hand, intimating that death is in his custody. With *Pluto* they had *Proserpina*, *Plutus*, *Charon*, *Cerberus*, *Acheron*, and the rest of the infernal deities. Abundance of foolish fables may be had concerning all these, and the rest of the heathen gods and heroes, in *Julius Hyginus*, *Apollodori Bibliotheca de Deorum Origine*, in *Homer's Ilias* and *Odysssea*, *Hesiod's Theogonia*, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, *Pausanias*, and others among the ancients:

* *Æneid.* 6. ver. 258. † *Juliani operum, Oratio* 5. pag. m. 167.

ancients: and in *Stephanus*, *Lloyd* and *Moreri's* dictionaries, *Galtruchius's* history of the heathen gods, *Dr. King's* historical account of the heathen gods and heroes, of which there are many editions, and others among the moderns. As to the origin of these fables, I incline not to make any peremptory conclusion. Only it seems most probable, that *Cham*, being the patron and promoter of idolatry after the flood, many of these fables came from stories transmitted by uncertain tradition concerning him, and his family and offspring; which agrees with the opinion *Dr. Cumberland* prosecutes more fully in his *Phenician* history. But the heathens knowing little of the origin of these stories, every age added to the fable, in which the *Greek* and *Latin* poets were very fruitful, prompted by *Satan* to debauch the morals of mankind. And this is the common fate of things that depend only upon tradition.

I proceed now to consider the idolatry of the ancient *Romans*, which spread itself far and near, before the coming of our Redeemer to destroy the works of the devil. *Numa Pompilius*, the second king of *Rome*, taught them the rites of their idol-worship; he left no other religion behind him at his death, than the very same heathenism which he found at *Rome* on his first coming thither; only he made laws to regulate that scum and refuse of divers nations and cities gathered there, both as to religion and civil government. And really the old *Roman* idolatry was no other than the *Greek* heathenism, even the same which was practised in *Greece*, and in all those countries which were planted with colonies from thence, as almost all *Italy* was at that time; and therefore the *Romans*, as well as the rest of the cities in *Italy*, looked on *Delphos* as a principal place of their worship with the same veneration that the *Greeks* did, and had frequent recourse thither on religious accounts, as the *Roman* histories on many occasions acquaint us. This religion *Numa*, while he lived among the *Sabines*, being accurately versed in, and a diligent practiser thereof, on his coming to *Rome*, finding the *Romans* all out of order,

for in the time of *Romulus* they minded little else but fighting, he instructed them in it, and framed several rules and constitutions for the more regular practice thereof. All which he pretended he had received from the Goddess *Egeria*, that the barbarous people, as *Florus* speaks *, might the better receive them. Particularly *Numa* taught the *Romans* to worship their gods, by offering corn and cakes besprinkled with salt; to erect temples, but no images, thinking it absurd and impossible to represent that incomprehensible power by outward shapes and figures. Many years after that, *Tarquinius Priscus* taught them, according to the *Grecian* manner, to set up images to represent their gods. *Varro*, as cited by *Augustine*, says †, *The ancient Romans, for more than 170 years, worshipped the gods without images; and if they had done so still, the gods might have been served with greater purity, which he proves by the example of Judea, and concludes, that those who first brought in images into the worship of the gods, took away the fear due to them, and led people into error.* *Numa* also appointed the vestal virgins ‡, who were to remain in that state 30 years; the first ten they were learners, the next ten they practised in their office, and the third ten years they were teachers of the novices. If they committed whoredom, they were burned or buried alive. He instituted likewise many of the festival days, lucky and unlucky times. He divided the year into twelve months, and appointed the priests of *Mars* called *Salii*. But of their priests, divinations, and other rites of their worship, I shall speak afterward, and in the mean time shall consider first the object of their idolatry.

The Heathen *Romans* worshipped the same deities as the *Greeks*, and had the same fables about them; which therefore need not be again repeated. Only the *Romans* by degrees increased the Litany of their gods to a greater number. Their chief idols were twenty, viz. *Jupiter* the god of thunder, *Juno* of riches, *Venus* of beauty, *Minerva* of wisdom, *Vesta* of the earth, *Ceres* of corn, *Di-*

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* Lib. 1. cap. 2. † De civitate Dei, lib. 4. cap. 31.

‡ *Florus*, lib. 1. cap. 2.

ana of hunting, *Mars* of war, *Mercury* of eloquence, *Vulcan* of fire, *Apollo* of physic, *Neptune* of the sea, *Janus* of husbandry, *Saturn* of time, *Pluto* of hell, *Bacchus* of wine, *Tellus* of seeds, *Genius* of nativities, the *Sun*, and the *Moon*, (tho' *Macrobius* in his *Saturnalia* contends, that under most of these the *Sun* is to be understood.) And beside these they worshipped many deities of lesser note, as *Bellona* the goddess of war, *Victoria* of victory, *Nemesis* of revenge, *Cupid* of Love, the *Charites* or three Graces, the tutelar Gods, the *Lares* or household gods, the three *Parcæ*, or fatal sisters, *Clotbo*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*, as presiding over destinies; the *Furiæ* or *Eumenides*, *Alecto*, *Tisiphone* and *Megæra*, as ordering punishments, and the goddess of *Fortune*. All these were called *Dii minorum gentium*, the gods of lesser note. There were others they called *Indigetes*. These were men and women, who for their supposed merits were canonized and worshipped; as *Hercules*, *Faunus*, *Evander*, *Carmenta*, *Castor* and *Pollux*, *Æsculapius*, *Romulus*, &c. Yea, not only men supposed virtuous, but even the Virtues themselves were deified. These had their temples, sacrifices, and festivals; as *Vertue*, *Honour*, *Piety*, *Chastity*, *Peace*, *Concord*, *Quietness*, *Liberty*, *Safety*, and *Felicity*. *Lucullus*, who flourished about the 683^d year after the building of *Rome*, erected a temple to the last of these, of which *Augustine* says †, *Why was not Felicity sooner worshipped? Why did not Romulus, when he built a city, which he desired to be happy, erect a temple to her? since she alone could shew the shortest way for a man to be happy.* They had also inferior deities, whose merits deserved no veneration. These they called *Semones*, as it were *Semi-homines*, half men, such as *Priapus*, *Vertumnus*, *Hippona*, *Nænia*. At the same rate old wives and nurses became authors of a multitude of deities. They invented *Lucina* to give easy labour, *Opis* to receive the child, *Levana* that took him up, *Vagitanus* who opened his mouth to weep, *Cunina* who guarded the cradle, the *Carmentes* who read the destiny, *Rumina* who made him suck, *Educa* and *Potina*, who made him eat and drink; and a great many

† De civitate Dei, lib. 4. cap. 23.

many more of that sort, which *Augustine* speaks of*. They had gods of all kinds, as *Somnus*, *Dolor*, *Pavor*, Sleep, Grief, Fear, Money, Wisdom, &c. 'Tis well that they have not left us the whole dictionary full of them: some learned authors have given us a pretty large catalogue of them †.

Besides, the country people had their Deities peculiar to their affairs, as *Rubigus* of smut, *Stercutius* of dung, *Bubona* of oxen, *Hippona* of horses, *Mellona* of honey, *Pomona* of fruit, *Pales* of fodder, *Flora* of flowers, *Terminus* of bounds, *Pan* of shepherds, *Sylvanus* of fields and woods, *Priapus* of seeds and gardens; yea, *Cloacina* of sinks and privies, as *Augustine* says, *Non numina colendum, sed crimina colentium*, that is, *Not Gods to be worshipped, but the scandal of the worshippers* ||. Who can recount them? As the same learned Father says, *Me pudet quod illos non piget* ‡, “ I am ashamed of these things that “ they are not weary of.” So fond and foolish were the *Romans* in idolatry, that they borrowed Gods of the nations they subdued. Those who could not defend their own country, they adored them as protectors of their vast empire. Their fables about them were innumerable, as may be seen in *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, and in all the poets. There was not a constellation in the heavens, but they had some fable or other concerning it, as the curious may see by reading *Julii Hygini Astronomicon*, an author who wrote in the *Augustan* age. So careful were they, that not any thing should be neglected, that whatever was remarkable in heaven, earth, seas, hills, rivers or fires, was all deified, as *Prudentius* a christian poet** long ago observed. But even their own poets did not believe

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* De civitate Dei, lib. 4. cap. 11.

† Vide Andream Beyerum in Additamentis ad Seldenum de Dis Syris pag. m. 150—ad 180. || De civitate Dei, lib. 4. cap. 23.

‡ Ibid. lib. 4. cap. 8.

** Libro primo contra Symmachum, ver. 297.

*Quicquid humus, pelagus, cœlum mirabile gignit,
Id duxere Deos: colles, freta, flumina, flammæ.*

The same in English.

What Heaven or Earth, Hills, Rivers, Fires and Seas
Of Wonders bear, were all made Deities.

what they wrote upon these subjects. *Manilius* a heathen, who lived in the same age with *Hyginus*, says *, “ The poets by their verses have turned the heavens into a mere fable.” Those who are curious may see plain testimonies from the best heathen authors, how birds, fishes, four-footed beasts, serpents, insects, plants, minerals, trees, &c. were abused to idolatry by the heathen, in the books of the learned *Joannes Gerardus Vossius*, *de origine & progressu idololatriæ* † : Tho’ in my humble opinion that very learned author seems in that large work, to write a natural history as much as a treatise of idolatry ; yet there is a great collection upon both these subjects, and also in his 7th and 8th books of the same work, upon all the affections and incidents of a man’s life, abused to idolatry, and of the symbols and emblems whereby their idols were honoured in the last book.

I do not see that reason or religion does oblige us to moralize the fables of the heathen : the fathers, and ancient writers against the *Gentiles*, did not use this method. Tho’ *Natalis Comes*, in his mythology, or explication of the fables, *Alexander Ross* in his *Mystagogus Poeticus*, and some others in their writings of the wisdom of the ancients, have followed this way, I see no necessity for it. Few, if any, of the fables, admit a sound sense in morality. The Spirit of God in the inspired writings declares, that the gods of the heathen were devils ; *They sacrificed to devils, not to God*, Deut. xxxii. 17. *They sacrificed their sons and daughters to devils*, Psal. cvi. 37. *The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, not unto God*, 1 Cor. x. 20. *They shall no more offer their sacrifices to devils, after whom they have gone a whoring*, Levit. xvii. 9. ’Tis then impossible that these diabolical victims, or the romantic tales, that have been forged about them, can admit of a safe sense. Nay, the fables of the *Gentiles* concerning their idols, have been promoted among men, to lessen the esteem due to our
great

* In *Astronomico*, lib. 2. ver. 37.

Quorum carminibus nihil est nisi fabula cælum.

† De idololatria, Vol. 2. in 4to, pag. m. 1126, --- 1272, --- 1523, --- 1644, &c. Vol. 3. pag. 173.

I might now proceed to discourse of the rites of idolatrous worship which were practised by the *Romans* and other *Gentile* nations. In order to this, we may consider, that the knowledge of God does necessarily require of us obedience, worship and respect, which we are bound in justice to render to our Creator, as a Being infinitely excellent, to whom we owe ourselves and all our enjoyments. Religion teaches us to adore God with outward expressions of adoration as well as inward, to make our addresses to him by prayer, as the fountain whence all our good things proceed, to publish his praises, to trust in him, to reverence, fear, serve and obey him in the duties and means of his appointment. But the devils having banished from the world the true knowledge of God, and established themselves in his room, they obliged mankind to adore them, and their statues, instead of God, and usurped by these means the prerogatives of the god-head. To these *Dæmons* and Idol-deities all publick and private prayers and vows were directed; in honour of them, festival-days, sacrifices, public and solemn games were instituted, and temples and altars

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† In Octavio, pag. m. 50.

erected. This might lead us to enquire into the several parts of worship render'd to the heathen idols; but every writer of the *Greek* and *Roman* antiquities being full upon this subject, as not only the large and learned collections of *Grævius* and *Gronovius*, *Montfaucon's* Antiquity explain'd, *Rosinus*, *Dempster*, *Lilius Gyraldus*, and *Gerard Vossius* *, but even in our own language, *Goodwin*, *Kennet's Roman* and *Potter's Greek* Antiquities, and many others; a few short remarks shall then suffice us.

First, The heathens had temples for their Deities. The *Syrians* had them before the temple at *Jerusalem* was erected; for in the book of *Judges*, Chap. ix. 4. we hear of the house of the God *Berith*, and Chap. xvi. of the temple of *Dagon*, where *Sampson* made sport for the *Philistines*; And when the ark of God was brought into the house of *Dagon*, the Idol did fall and was broken in pieces, 1 Sam. v. The arms of *Saul*, after his defeat, were brought into the temple of *Ashtoreth*, 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. The temple of *Diana* at *Ephesus* was one of the wonders of the heathen world; it was seated in a marshy-ground for fear of earthquakes; it was 425 feet in length, 220 in breadth, and 127 stately pillars were in it, each of them the work of a king, who resolved to make his piety and magnificence therein appear. Several other temples were very sumptuous, as that consecrated to *Minerva*, and that to *Mars* at *Athens*, where the judges examined causes of life and death. The Capitol at *Rome* consecrated to *Jupiter Imperator*, also the temples of *Neptune*, *Vulcan*, *Saturn*, *Mars*, *Æsculapius*, *Hercules*, *Vesta*, *Janus*, &c. were all of them magnificent structures, worthy of the *Roman* grandeur, and especially the *Pantheon* consecrated to all the Gods. *Monf. Jurieu* conceives † some of the heathens built their temples near by the model of the house of God at *Jerusalem*. Thus *Lucian*, describing the temple of the *Syrian* Goddess at *Hierapolis*, says ||, That it was surrounded with two walls, and two courts, the first next to the first wall, and the other within the second. In these temples were places at the gate, where people washed

* De idololatria, lib. 9. per totum. † Hist. des Dogmes, &c. pag. 760.
 || De Dea Syra, operum Luciani, Tom. 2. pag. 671, & seqq.

washed themselves before they went into the temple, and there were officers set at the gate to make aspersions on those who entred. Theodoret informs us *, That when Valentinian followed the Emperor Julian, called the Apostate, into the temple of Fortune, the officers having thrown lustral water upon him, he beat the fellow who had defiled him, being a Christian, with such an aspersion. Before the heathen temples there was a great space called Πρόδρομος, a profane walking-place, where men walked together, and things were sold as in a market; the Greeks call it Πρόναον. There was a great part of the temple, called Cella, in which stood the image of the deity, now called the Choir. Behind all these was the hinder part of the temple Ὀπισθόδομος. The popish churches are much after the same model, and seem very near to imitate the heathen temples.

Secondly, The principal ornaments of their temples were altars, tables, lamps, statues, and sacrifices: these last being a chief part of their pagan worship, a temple could not be without an altar to offer them upon. Athenæus says, *There was a golden altar at Babylon, upon which none but sucking pigs were sacrificed* †. Some of their altars were made of green turfs, as we find in Virgil ‖. But most part of them were of stone or marble. Lucian affirms ‡, *the great altar for sacrifices was without the temple*; for to his description of the inside of the altar, he adds, *Without is a brazen altar, with several statues both of kings and priests*. Had the altar been within the temple, the smoak of the sacrifices must immediately have filled it with a thick air, and a noisome smell. But they had another altar serving only for perfumes, as we find in Virgil **. Tables were common moveables in their temples. These three commonly go together, *aræ, foci & mensæ*. Cicero says, *Iste deorum ignes solennes, mensas, abditos & penetrales focos*

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* Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 16. † Deipnosophistæ, lib. 9. cap. 18.

‖ Æneid. 12. ver. 118.

In medioque focos & Diis communibus aras Gramineas----

‡ De Dea Syra, Tom. 2. pag. 678.

** Æneid. 4. ver. 453.

-----Thuricremis cum dona imponeret aris,

pervertit * ; i. e. *He has turned to a wrong use the solemn fires of the Gods, their tables and their hidden and sacred hearths.* They used to eat at these tables after the sacrifices. Hence the Apostle *Paul* forbids Christians to sit at meat in the idol temples, 1 Cor. viii. 10. Lamps and tapers were another ornament of the heathens in their temple-worship, especially on festivals. Therefore *Tertullian* says †, *Shall we Christians be condemned, because we do not cover our doors with laurels on your festivals? Nor break in on day-light with lamps?—Who forces a philosopher to swear, or to light vain lamps at noon-day?* *Lactantius* enlarges upon the same subject: He, speaking of the heathen, says ‖, *They kill rich fat sacrifices to their Gods, as if they were hungry, — they light lamps to them, as if they were in darkness.—Behold the Sun, the light of the world, and be persuaded God does not need burning tapers, who for the use of the world has created so clear and so glorious a light!—May he not be thought out of his wits, who to the Creator of light offers candles and tapers? He requires a better light, even a mind enlightned from above, which those who know not God cannot offer.* Now had it been the custom of Christians in these times to burn lamps and tapers in their churches, as the papists do at this day, *Tertullian* and *Lactantius* could not have found such fault with the heathens for doing it.

Thirdly, In these temples the heathens had many statues consecrated to their idols. We have already proved that they had no images in the earliest times of idolatry ‡: But it is undeniable that afterward, when their idolatrous worship had made further progress over the world, that statues and images were received. The *Minerva* of *Athens* did bear in her buckler the image of the workman who formed it, so artfully wrought, that it was not possible to deface or remove it, without a visible prejudice to the whole piece. The statue of *Jupiter Olympius* made by *Phidias*, was 150 cubits high, the head thereof of pure gold, but the body of brass. And there were innumerable more of that kind of curious workmanship.

So

* In oratione de aruspicum responsis. † Apolog. cap. 35. pag. 45.

‖ Institut. lib. 6. cap. 2. ‡ See pag. 154, & seqq.

So little confidence had the heathens in the Gods they worshipped, that they fastned them with cords when their cities were besieged, lest they should desert their interest, and favour that of their enemies. Thus *Curtius* says *,
 “ That when *Alexander* the Great besieged *Tyre*, the in-
 “ habitants bound the statues of *Apollo* and *Hercules*, to
 “ whose protection they had dedicated their city, with a
 “ golden chain, thinking thus to retain their favour.”

The *Romans* had a strange custom in their idol-worship, to advance their emperors after their death, into the number of the Gods. Thus *Augustus* deified *Julius Cæsar*, and *Tiberius* rewarded *Augustus* with the same honour. The rites of their consecration are at large described by *Rosinus* † from *Dion* and *Herodian*. The sum of the whole is, “ The body of the emperor being buried according to the usual custom, his effigies in wax was placed at the entry of the palace, sumptuously adorned. The physicians did visit him for seven days, as if alive, but affixed to his bed. Mean while all the senate and nobility were present in mourning habits. When these days were expired, he was held for dead, and they transported him to a publick place, where the magistrates quitted their office, and the new emperor ascended an high pulpit, called *Rostra*, where he made a funeral oration in honour of the deceased.— Afterwards they carried the image to the field of *Mars*, where a pile of aromatic stuff was erected to burn it. In the mean time the *Roman* Gentlemen did ride round it in order. At last the new emperor with a torch set the pile of wood, adorned with spices, in a flame, and an eagle was dismissed from the top of it, which was imagined to carry the soul of this new deity to heaven. Thus the *Apotheosis* or Consecration ended, the people did feast and entertain themselves with all manner of sports, and the statue of the new deity was erected in the temple and worshipped.” The Church of *Rome* has many such foolish superstitions in the canonization of saints.

Fourthly,

* Lib. 4. cap. 3. † Antiq. Rom. lib. 3. cap. 18. pag. m. 128. & seqq.

Fourthly, The heathen *Greeks* and *Romans* had many festival solemnities in honour of their Gods. *Ovid* gives us a great number of them *, tho' half of his *Fasts* be wanting, where many more were recorded. *Lilius Gyraldus* has a long catalogue of them †. I shall name a few. On the the first of *January* they sent *Strenæ*, or gifts to their friends. In the *Saturnalia* the slaves did lord it over their masters; the *Agonalia* were dedicated to the God of Action, the *Carmentalia* to *Carmenta*, *Evander's* mother. The *Roman* ladies took a boundless liberty to commit abominable things in the festivals of *Venus* and *Priapus*, which we discoursed of in the former part of this chapter. In the days consecrated to *Pallas* Goddess of war, maids in some places did meet and fight one against another, till some fell dead on the ground. In the feasts called *Lupercalia* at *Rome*, the priests ran naked about the streets, with goat's skins on their hands, because heretofore the *Romans* did happily recover their beasts, when they ran in this manner after the thieves, who had driven them away. In the festival of *Ceres*, her worshippers ran up and down with lighted torches in their hands, because she thus ran about the world to seek her daughter *Proserpina*. This ceremony was only acted by women, who in the temple of *Ceres* committed a thousand shameful things, where it was not lawful to reveal what was acted at that time, because *Ceres* did not reveal her secret, till she heard of her daughter's welfare. *Bellonaria* were the festivals of *Bellona*, in which the priests did offer her their own blood ‡. *Juvenilia* were appointed by *Nero* at the first shaving of his beard. But I cannot go through the whole of them. Every idol had some festival or other wherein he was worshipped. You may judge what they were by the sketch we have given. The Church of *Rome* appears to have multiplied their holy-days after the example of the heathen.

Besides

* In sex Libris Fastorum.

† De Diis Syntagma, cap. 17. pag. 472, & seqq.

‡ Lucani Pharsalia, lib. 1. ver. 565.

—————Tum, quos sectis Bellona lacertis
Sava movet—————

Besides the festivals, the *Greeks* and *Romans* had also games and combats instituted in honour of their Gods. Among the *Greeks* the *Olympic Games* were most famous, celebrated in *Olympia*, a city in the territory of the *Piseans*. They were said to be instituted by *Hercules*, in honour of *Jupiter Olympius*. The conqueror was rewarded with a crown of the olive-tree. Every fourth year they met upon the place to celebrate these games. Hence proceeds the period of the *Olympiads*, which is the most famous Epocha of chronology among the heathens, all accounts of time before this being very uncertain among them; and this is commonly reckoned* to coincide in its commencement with the 3174th year after the creation of the world, or the 34th of *Uzziah* king of *Judah*. Next after the *Olympic*, came in the *Isthmian* games, which were celebrated in the Isthmus of *Corinth*, to the honour of *Neptune*. The victors were crowned with garlands of pine-leaves. Lastly, The *Nemean* games, so called from *Nemea*, a village and grove betwixt *Cleonæ* and *Phlius*. They were celebrated every third year, and were said to be instituted by *Hercules*, after his victory over the *Nemean* lion. The exercises were chariot-races, and others of that kind. The victors were crowned with parsley†.

Tho' from all parts of *Greece* they crowded to these games, yet there was nothing so sumptuous and stately to be seen there as at *Rome*, where their *Circus*, *Theatres* and *Amphitheatres* were crowded with innumerable spectators. The champions were ushered in with great pomp, the statues of the Gods, and of the worthies of the empire, were carried before them, then followed a great number of chariots, succeeded by spoils taken from the enemies, and precious jewels and ornaments of the empire. After this train the priests, augurs and pontiffs marched, in order to offer sacrifices to some of the deities, according to occasion. The secular games were every hundredth year. The cryer did proclaim they were such sports as none alive had seen, or ever would see again.

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* Vide *Alstedii Chronologiam*, pag. 32. *Helvici Theatrum*, pag. 52.

† *Plutarch's Life of Timoleon*.

The Emperor *Vespasian* built an *Amphitheatre* of stone, which was finished by his son *Titus*, which might hold ninety thousand spectators sitting, and twenty thousand more upon their legs. The chief sport of the amphitheatre was that of gladiators or fencers, who were appointed to divert the people by spilling their own blood; a cruel servitude invented by the enemy of mankind! The inhumanity was so great, that some emperors gave a thousand, others ten thousand fencers, to fight and continue the slaughter to divert the people many days. The chase of wild beasts was one of the most pleasing diversions of the *Circus*. The Emperor *Titus* caused 5000 wild beasts to enter the *Circus* in one day. Sometimes they employed men to encounter lions, tygers, leopards, and such terrible beasts, that the spectators might have the pleasure to see men torn and devoured by them. Many Christians thus suffered martyrdom in the time of the persecuting heathen emperors. Sometimes they did show the burning of cities, bloody battles, and other wonderful and cruel spectacles to the people, by certain engines contrived for that purpose. Prodigious expence was bestowed on these games. Even *Lucian* a Pagan introduces *Anacharsis* a Barbarian, deriding all these shows, as a piece of unaccountable foolery and madness*. But they were never intirely abolished, till the overthrow of heathenish idolatry, by the *Roman* Emperors becoming Christians, who suppressed these sacrifices to the devil, as unbecoming that piety, clemency and mercy which the Gospel teaches us.

Fifthly, There was a great number of priests employed in the idol-worship of the heathen temples. The priests of *Mars*, called *Salii*, were the most ancient of that kind among the *Romans*, being instituted by king *Numa*† who first taught them the rites of their superstition. The *Salii* were at first but twelve in number, afterwards they encreased to twenty four. They were chosen out of the *Patricii*, or men of first rank, in the month of *March*; they were to dance solemnly with their *Ancilia*,
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* De Gymnasiis, operum tom. 2. pag. m. 269, & seqq.

† Florus, lib. 1. cap. 2.

one of which, say they, fell down from heaven. These festival dances were dedicated to *Mars*. The *Romans* had also their *Augures*, who did prophesy by the flying and motion of birds. The soothsayer ascended some eminent place, with the *Augural* robe upon his back, and in his hand a crooked staff, called *Lituus**, with which he limited a certain place in the air, called *templum*; the birds that did flee within this space, intimating the things desired, were called *Præpetes*. The other birds, that were consulted by their singing, were called *Oscines*. The left hand was esteemed unfortunate. It belonged to the office of the augurs, to judge of unusual accidents; as thunders, fire, flames, monsters, voices, inundations, prodigies, &c. and to interpret the mind of the Gods intended by them. It was also the custom of the *Romans* to divine by little chickens while a feeding. If these pullets did eat nothing, or but slowly, they construed it a dangerous sign. This caused the *Roman* armies to march, or abide in their camp, as is often observed by *Livy* and other Historians: yea, it was not lawful to resolve upon any business of importance, till these were consulted. They had also their *Aruspices*, who took conjectures from the sight of the intrails of the sacrifices offered to the Gods. We shall hear afterward, in the fourth chapter of this book, what a struggle the Christian Emperors had to suppress this divining tribe. Indeed sorcery and divination is a constant concomitant of Paganism, and a great evidence of the prevailing of the kingdom of darkness. To return, the *Romans* had also their *Triumviri*, called *Epulones*, who had the charge of the solemn feasts, and other *Triumviri*, who had the charge of the *Sibyls* books. The *Fratres Arvales* had the charge of the fields; the *Feciales* of the wars. There were many other orders of *Flamines* or priests, in proportion to the number of their greater Gods. *Jupiter's* priests were called *Diales*; those of *Mars*, *Martiales*; of *Quirinus*, *Quirinales*; the *Curetes*, or *Corybantes*, were the priests of *Cybele*. Over all these there was a high-priest, or *Rex Sacrificulus*, the king of priests, because in ancient times

kings

* Cicero de Divinatione, lib. 2. §. 80.

kings did exercise the priestly office. Above them all was the pontifical college, which at first consisted only of eight persons, but *Sylla* encreased them to fifteen. These were to assist the chief *Pontifex* or *Pope*, who had the chief power to direct sacrifices, holy-days, priests, festivals, vestals, vows, funerals, idols, oaths, ceremonies, and whatsoever concerned their Religion. In short, he had more power than the kings themselves; for he might ascend the Capitol in his litter, which was not permitted to any other; and whatsoever criminal fled to him, he was that day free from punishment. To what we have said concerning the *Roman* priests, it may be added, that *Lucian* says, *That the priests of the Syrian Goddess † wear white garments, and a bonnet on their head; the high-priest is changed every year, he only wears a purple garment, and a golden tyre upon his head.*

Sixthly, The Heathens offered many kinds of sacrifices to their Deities. They had propitiatory sacrifices, to appease the Gods when offended; impetratory, to ask favours of them; and thank-offerings, when they gave them victories, or did them favours. But they had another end in their sacrifices, not known to the *Jews*, or any who acted by divine appointment; that is, to consult the destiny about things to come. Thus the generals of their armies offered sacrifices before an engagement, to consult the Gods concerning the success. It was a good omen, when the victim went freely to the altar, and a bad one when it was dragged. Other omens they had from the intrails of the sacrifices, from the flying of birds, from their feeding, and many more signs of that kind. *Cicero* strongly asserts the Being of God and Providence, but solidly confutes the superstitious divinations of his own people*. *What are lots or divinations?* says he; *Nothing else than the throwing of the dice, in which rashness or chance makes a man lucky, not solid counsel. The whole affair is managed by trick and fallacy, or is designed for gain, or leading men to superstition and error.* In another place, the same eloquent author declares

† De Dea Syra, operum tom. 2. pag. 679.

* De Divinatione, lib. 2. §. 85.

declares his opinion thus ††: *How small a part of what is foretold by these divinations is true in fact? Or if it happen to come to pass, what reason can be given for it but chance? King Prusias, when the banished Hannibal did advise him to fight, said he durst not, because the intrails of the victims did forbid: Wilt thou, says Hannibal, rather trust the heart of a calf, than an old experienced general? As to the matter sacrificed, the proper sacrifices under the law of Moses were the ox, including the calf and bullock, the sheep, the lamb, the goat, the kid, the pigeon, and the turtle-dove. But the Heathens had a variety of other victims. When discoursing of Molech, we demonstrated, that upon several occasions they used human sacrifices*, and that even the polite Greeks and Romans were guilty of this barbarity, which was not taken away till the time of the Emperor Hadrian†: “Plutarch tells ‡ of a misfortune that happened to a vestal virgin, upon which it was ordered by the senate, that the priests should consult the Sibylline books, where they found it portended a great calamity to the commonwealth; for avoiding whereof, they commanded two Greeks and two Gauls to be sacrificed to evil spirits; and by burying them alive in the very place, to make propitiation to the Gods.” Josephus Acosta, in his History of the Indies*, says, “The devils possessed the Americans with this kind of fury to an incredible degree. When ever the Inca king of Peru was troubled with any disease, or was concerned for success in war or other affairs, the Peruvians sacrificed ten children from four to six years of age; and upon his coronation-day they sacrificed to the number of 200 children, from four to ten years of age. When the father was sick, his son was sacrificed to the Sun, or Viriacocha, praying him to be contented with the son, and spare the father.” Next to men, the Heathens sacrificed*

†† Ibid. §. 52.—*An tu, inquit, caruncula vitulina major quam imperatori veteri credere?* ** See pag. 178, to 186.

† Vide Euseb. de Præp. Evang. lib. 4. cap. 16.

‡ Roman Questions, Numb. 83. * Lib. 5. cap. 19.

crificed bulls, oxen, cows, sheep, and goats. To *Ceres* they offered a sow †. *Plutarch* informs us, That a dog was sacrificed to *Genita Mana*, a Demon that presides over generations ‡. And in another place he says, The Greeks sacrificed a dog in all their expiations, and carry a little dog to *Proserpina*, among other expiatory oblations ||. Tho' the ass be a vile dull creature, yet they sacrificed him to *Priapus* [*]. *Plutarch* also says [†], That once in the year the horse that won the prize, in the chariot races on December 13th, was sacrificed to *Mars*. The goat, the sheep, the ewe and the lamb, were common sacrifices. By the famous history of *Socrates's* death, we find a cock was sacrificed to *Æsculapius* [‡]. *Athenæus* says [||], That fisher-men offered sacrifices of their fish to *Neptune*. Beside all these, they offered to their Deities inanimate things, as milk [**], wine, oil, frankincense, flowers and fruits. These had all their proper use in sacrifices, and honey was made an ingredient in cakes to *Bacchus*.

As to the ceremonies used in the sacrifices, we have an account of them from *Dionysius Halicarnassæus* [††]. The pomp, says he, being over, the consuls, with the priests, and others consecrated to that purpose, sacrificed in the same manner as with us, (that is in Greece;) for first they wash their hands, and purify the victims with a sprinkling of lustral water. They spread over his head the fruits of the earth, or *mola salsa*; and having made a prayer, they give the word of command to slay the victim. Then they strike the sacrifice with a great club upon the temples, and others put knives under it, that it may fall upon them. Then

† Ovid. *Fastor.* lib. 1. ver. 299.

Prima Ceres avida gavisæ est sanguine porcæ.

Juvenal. *Satyr.* 2. ver. 86.

Atque Bonam teneræ placant abdomine porcæ.

‡ Roman Questions, Number 52. || Ibid. Numb. 68.

[*] Ovid. *Fastor.* lib. 1. ver. 340.

Cæditur & rigido custodi ruris asellus.

[†] Roman Questions, Numb. 97.

[‡] Plato in *Phædone*.——

[||] *Deipnosoph.* lib. 8.

[**] Horat. lib. 2. *Epist.* 1. ver. 143, 144.

—— *Sylvanum lacte piabant*

Floribus & vino genium——

[††] *Antiq. Rom.* lib. 7. cap. 72.

Then 'tis skinned and cut in pieces, and the best of the intrails and other parts taken out; which chosen parts are covered with barley-flower, brought unto those who sacrifice, who kindling the fire, laid them through several parts on the altar; and while these are burning, they make an effusion of wine. Apollonius, in the eighth of his *Argonautics*, explains these ceremonies thus: Then Anicæus struck with a copper ax the neck of the other ox, and cut off his horns. The ox falling to the ground, the companions cut his throat, and divided him into quarters and pieces, chiefly the sacred legs; and having covered them with fat, put them on the fire: and Jason made the sprinkling of the mola salsa.

The learned Peter Jurieu, in the last treatise of his *History of the Doctrines and Worship of the Church good and evil*, gives several particulars wherein the Heathens imitate the Jews in their solemn Rites. 'Tis easy for a man of learning to multiply parallels; but I see no necessity for doing it upon this subject. 'Tis certain, from what we have already observed concerning the matter of their sacrifices, and other rites of their superstition, that there was a plain disagreement. 'Tis not to be found among any of the ceremonies of the Heathen, that before the victim was slain, he that offered it laid his hand on the head of the beast, and confessed his sins, saying, *I have sinned, I have done wickedly, I have rebelled and committed such sins or crimes; but I repent, and offer this sacrifice for an atonement.* Far less had the Heathen the fire coming down from heaven, and consuming the sacrifice. This being a token of divine acceptance, they could not have it. Neither had they whole burnt-offerings, nor did they sprinkle the blood upon the altar and the people; which *Lucian* unjustly ridicules*. What was all their religious performances, but worship and service to the devil? To which they, by their fruitful invention, daily added new superstitions; and the whole was most abominable to a holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

S 2

Having

* De sacrificiis, operum Luciani tom. 1. pag. m. 368.

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Having explained the Idolatry of the ancient *Syrians, Egyptians, Phenicians, Canaanites, Persians, Greeks* and *Romans*, I shall put a period to this chapter, when I have once given a short hint of the Idols of some ancient Western Nations, who by the *Greeks* and *Romans* were called *Barbarians*. To understand how this detestable superstition was removed since our Redeemer's coming into the world, we must know what it was before his time. In the times of the Old Testament, there was but a little spot of the world, where the true God was worshipped according to his own appointment, even in the land of *Canaan*. All the rest of the world, from *India* to *Britain*, from *Africa* to *Scythia*, was full of abominable Idolatry: Tho' from want of writings among those people in the times of their ignorance, we can give but a slender account of their superstition.

To begin at home with our ancient *Britons*: Their rites were almost wholly magical; they adored a multitude of Idols. *Gildas* calls them * *a company of devilish monsters, exceeding the number of those in Egypt*. They worshipped *Thor*, called the same with *Jupiter*. He was placed on a high throne, with a crown of gold on his head, encompassed with many stars, and particularly seven, representing the planets, in his left-hand, and a scepter in his right. From him *Thursday* is denominated. *Woden* or *Mars*, was another of their Deities; he was represented as a mighty man in perfect armour, holding in one hand his sword lifted up, and his buckler in the other. From him *Wednesday* derives its name. *Tuisco* was an Idol both here and in *Germany*. Hence the inhabitants of the Low-countries are called *Tutch*, or *Duytsch-men*. From him *Tuesday* is named. *Friga* or *Venus* was another Deity. To her they made addresses for earthly blessings. And to her *Friday* was dedicated. *Seater* was an ill-favoured Idol, painted like an old envious rascal, with a thin face, a long beard, a wheel and a basket of flowers in his hand, and girded about with a long girdle. From him our *Saturday* derived its name. They

* De excidio Britanniae, non longè ab initio mihi in Bibl. patrum, tom. 3. col. 580.

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They also worshipped the Sun, who stood upon an high pillar, as half a man, with a face full of rays of light, and a flaming wheel on his breast. He was adored upon *Sunday*. The Moon was another Idol worshipped in *England*, represented as a beautiful maid, having her head covered, and two ears standing out. *Ermenseul* was an Idol favourable to the poor, represented as a great man among heaps of flowers. Upon his head he supported a cock, upon his breast a bear, and in his right hand he held a displayed banner. *Flint* was another Idol, so called, because he stood among or upon flints: And *Bellatucadrus*, as appears by an ancient inscription lately found in *Westmoreland*, *Sancto Deo Bellatucadro*. There was yet another Idol, named *Geta*, mentioned by *Sedulius*, a *Scots* Author, who flourished in the fifth century, in the reign of *Theodosius the younger*, and *Valentinian III.* * tho' I doubt if the verses some authors quote from *Sedulius*, as at the foot of the page †, do prove that *Geta* was an Idol. The priests of these heathenish Idols were called *Druidæ*, from the oaks under which they used to teach and sacrifice. They expounded religious mysteries, taught youth, decided controversies, and ordered rewards and punishments. They committed not their mysteries to writing, but to the memory of their disciples, who spent years in learning by art their precepts in verse. They had the same kind of priests in *Gaul*, as *Pliny* ‡ and *Lucan* || inform us.

S 3

The

* Vide Præfationem ante Editionem Sedulii, Edinburgensem 1701.

† Carminis paschalis exordium, pag. 2.

*Cum sua Gentiles studeant fragmenta Poeta
Grandisonis pompare modis, tragicoque boatu,
Ridiculae Getæ, seu qualibet arte canendi, &c.*

‡ Nat. Hist. lib. 16. cap. 44. pag. m. 477.

|| Lucani Pharsalia, lib. 1. ver. 447, &c.

*Vos quoque qui fortes animas, belloque peremptas
Laudibus in longum vates dimittitis ævum,
Plurima securi fudistis carmina Bardi.
Et vos Barbaricos ritus, moremque sinistrum
Sacrorum Druidæ positis repetistis ab armis.
Solis nōsse Deos, & cæli numina vobis,
Aut solis nescire datum: nemora alta remotis
Incolitis lucis.*

262 *The Idolatry of the Western Nations.*

The *Germans* had the same Idols as in *Britain*, for from the Heathen *Saxons* the *English* learned their Idolatry. The *Gauls* and *Germans* also adored *Teutates*, *Hesus*, *Taranis* and *Belenus*, and polluted their altars with human sacrifices, as has been already proved[*]. *Tacitus* says, *They celebrated in old verse, which is the only way of preserving their history and annals among them, their God Tuisto, born of the earth, and his son Manus* [†], *the founder of their nation, to whom they assign three sons.* The same author afterwards says [‡], *The Germans worship especially Mercury, whom they appease with human sacrifices on certain days, as they do Hercules and Mars, with other animals.* See other instances in *Cæsar* [||] and *Tacitus* **, who says, *That in the island Mona, (which some translate the Isle of Man, others Anglesey; tho' I conceive the account Tacitus gives of it agrees best with the latter) after the defeat, the Romans put garrisons in their towns, and cut down their groves dedicated to their cruel superstitions; for this inhuman people were accustomed to shed the blood of their prisoners on their altars, and consult their Gods over the reeking bowels of men.* The *Spaniards*, as *Macrobius* says ††, worshipped the image of *Mars*, adorned with rays, with a very great veneration, calling him *Netos*. *Varro*, as *Pliny* relates *, derives *Lusitania*, now named *Portugal*, from *Lusus*, the companion of *Bacchus*, who attended him in his furies and bacchanals, and left him and *Pan* as governors of that country, who were worshipped there. The *Danes*, *Swedes*, *Muscovites*, *Russians*, *Pomeranians*, and their neighbours, had almost the same Idols with the *Germans*. These countries were but then thinly inhabited, and the accounts we have of them are very lame and uncertain. The *Russians* adored an Idol called *Perun*, in the shape of a man, holding a burning stone in his

[*] See pag. 184—186.

[†] De moribus Germanorum, non longè ab initio.

[‡] Ibid. operum pag. m. 635.

[||] Cæsar de Bello Gallico, lib. 6. cap. 20.

** Taciti Annal. lib. 14. cap. 30.

†† Saturnalia, lib. 1. cap. 19. pag. m. 357.

* Nat. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 1.

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his hand, resembling thunder. A fire of oak-wood was continually kept burning to the honour of this Idol. It was death to the priests, if they suffered it to go out. *Tacitus*, speaking of *Tiberius's* wars in Germany, says †, *Templum quod Tanfana vocabant solo æquantur*, the famous temple called *Tanfane* was razed to the foundation. *Lipsius*, in his notes on this place, says, *that some give the etymology of this word from Taenfank, which, in our language, signifies the beginning of things; but the old Britons called the fire Taen: tho' upon the whole, I conceive we need not determine to whom this beathen temple was dedicated.* The people of *Stetin* ‖, in *Pomerania*, worshipped a three-headed Idol, and used to ask oracles of a black horse, the charge of which was committed to one of the priests. In the countries about *Muscovy* they adored an Idol *Zolatta Baba*, the *Golden Hag*; a statue like an old woman, holding an infant in her bosom, and another child near her: to this Idol they offered rich fable skins. When I am to speak afterward in the sixth chapter, of the overthrow of this Idolatry, and of the establishment of Christianity among these nations, I may have some further occasion to name some of their Idols. Mean time, if we look northward, we may find the *Scythians* defiling themselves with human sacrifices to their *Diana Taurica*, of whom *Lucan* speaks*. They offered their captives taken in war, to other strange Idols, which some authors call *Poguisa*, *Jessa*, *Laeton*, *Nia*, *Marzana*, and *Zievonia*, Goddesses, beside two Deities named *Zelus* and *Poletus*, worshipped jointly, like the *Dioscouri*, *Castor* and *Pollux*.

As to the Idolatry of the remote parts of the world in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *America*, I design to discourse thereof in the seventh chapter of this essay, the knowledge of these countries being owing to the late improvements in arts and navigation, within these 200 years. I am wearied, and I fear I have wearied my reader, with these

S 4

abominations

† *Tacitus*, *Annalium* lib. 1. cap. 51.

‖ *Vid. Saxo-Grammaticus*, *Crantzius* in *Vandalia*, *Olaus Magnus*, &c.

* *Pharsalia*, lib. 1. ver. 446.

Et Taranis Scythica non mitior ara Dianæ.

abominations of the Heathen. However, the view we have had of them, may serve to discover the lamentable condition of the *Gentile* world, while serving Idols and Devils, while *aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise: without hope, and without God in the world.* In which state the world continued, so far as then inhabited, for about 2000 years, at least from before *Abraham* to the coming of Christ, except a little corner in the land of *Canaan*, where even the *Israelites*, the Church of God, were too oft defiled with the idolatry and evil customs of the neighbouring heathen nations, as we have already heard. And this may make us value the infinite Mercy of our God, who has sent *the day-spring from on high to visit us; to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet in the way of peace, to bring us from the power of Satan unto God, even our blessed Redeemer, who was manifested to destroy the works of the Devil, and to bring Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel.* Which leads me to

C H A P. III.

Of the Overthrow of Heathenish Idolatry, and of the Spreading of Christianity, from the beginning of the first, to the end of the third Century.

THE glorious God, who in former times, by divers methods of Divine Revelation, spoke to the Jews by his servants the prophets, has now in these last days spoken to us by his own Son; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. In the declining part of the Emperor *Augustus's* reign, this great Ambassador, our blessed Jesus, was sent from Heaven, to publish to the world the glad tidings of salvation,

vation*. The fall of heathenish Idolatry, by the preaching of the Gospel, and the conversion of the *Gentiles*, were an amazing revolution as ever happened in the world. God in infinite wisdom prepared all things for this great event, many ages before it came to pass, by admirable means, of which no man then knew the tendency and design†. (1.) He reduced the greater part of the world into two languages, which were almost universal, the *Greek* and *Latin*; that the knowledge of the Gospel might be more easily communicated, to which the difference of languages would have been a great hindrance. 'Tis true, the Apostles had the gift of tongues, and could speak all languages; but we are not to imagine that all the preachers of the Gospel had the same privilege. (2.) The world was almost wholly united under one empire, *viz.* the *Roman*, which was another mean to facilitate the conversion of the nations: for had the earth been divided under many little principalities, subject to many sovereigns, as the *West* is at this day, it had been in a manner impossible, but that divers of them, if not most part, would have denied entrance to the Apostles, who were the new preachers. Little princes, who have not much to do, concern themselves more particularly about every part of their territories, than great emperors, who having the government of the world to mind, are forced to remit the care of less important matters to their lieutenants. (3.) The dispersion of the *Jews* by the frequent captivities, was also a mean God made use of to prepare his way for converting the *Gentiles*. They gave the nations among whom they were scattered, some knowledge of the true God. (4.) Another thing which contributed very much to the design, was the translation of the Bible into the *Greek*

* N. B. The time of Christ's birth is reckoned by the learned *Spanheimius*, Hist. Christianæ, in Fol. Col. 323. and by others, to be in the year of the *Julian* Period 4714. from the Creation of the World 3950. the first year of the 195th Olympiad, from the building of *Rome* 753. of *Augustus's* Reign, (as commencing after the Murder of *Julius Cæsar*) 44. the tenth year of the Cycle of the Sun, and the second of the Cycle of the Moon, beginning, &c.

† *Jurieu's* Preface to the Accomplishment of Prophecies.

Greek tongue, whereby the sacred oracles became common among the Heathen. About the time of our Saviour's appearance in the world, there were many proselytes of the Gate. Such were not really *Jews*, but they ceased to be Heathens; they renounced their Idolatry; they were present every sabbath at the reading of *Moses* and the prophets; they had a distinct place in the synagogues; of them we read in the book of the *Acts*, *devout men who feared God*. *Cornelius* was of that number. It could not be difficult to them to abandon *Paganism*; they had already left it, and they could not be hindered from becoming Christians by *Judaism*; for they had never embraced it: so they became Christians without violence. A great part of the first converted *Gentiles* were such as these. (5.) By the same good Providence of God, philosophy began to flourish among the Heathen, a little before the coming of Christ, which was of great use to refine the minds of men, and render them capable of receiving celestial and sublime truths. Finally, God possessed the Heathen with a contempt of Idolatry and Idols; they were sick of their Gods, the false oracles of their *Dæmons* ceased, their priests lost their reputation, and all the world breathed after a change.

It deserves also to be noticed, that the *Roman* empire being now in the highest pitch of its grandeur, all its parts united under one monarchical government, and an universal peace over the whole; the temple of *Janus* being shut a third time: This opened a way to a free and uninterrupted commerce with all nations; and a speedier passage was prepared for publishing the doctrine of the Gospel, which the Apostles and first Preachers did carry to all the quarters of the world. As for the *Jews*, their minds were awakened about this time with busy expectations of the *Messias's* coming; and no sooner was the birth of the Holy Jesus proclaimed by the arrival of the wise men from the *East*, who came to pay homage to him, but *Jerusalem* was filled with noise and tumult. The *Sanhedrim* was convened, and consulted by *Herod*, who, jealous of his late gotten sovereignty, was resolved to dispatch this new competitor out of the way.

way. Deluded in his hopes, he betakes himself to acts of cruelty, commanding all infants under two years old to be put to death, and among these it seems his own son, which made *Augustus* pleasantly say *, 'Tis better to be Herod's hog, than his son. But the Providence of God secured the holy Infant, by timely admonishing his parents to retire to *Egypt*, where they remained till the death of *Herod*, and soon after that they returned.

Near thirty years our Lord remained obscure in the retirements of a private life, applying himself, as some of the ancients tell us, to *Joseph's* employment, the trade of a carpenter; so little patronage did he give to an idle life. But now he was called out of solitude, and owned as the Prophet God had sent to his Church. At his baptism the Holy Ghost in a visible shape descended upon him, and God by an audible voice testified of him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Accordingly he set himself to declare the counsels of God, going about all *Galilee*, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. He particularly explained the moral law, restoring it to its just authority over the minds of men, and redeeming it from those corrupt and perverse interpretations, which the masters of the *Jewish* Church had put upon it. He also insinuated the abrogation of the *Jewish* œconomy, to which he was sent to put a period, as has been before proved †, and to enlarge the bounds of salvation, and admit both *Jew* and *Gentile* to the terms of mercy. For he came as mediator between God and man, to reconcile the world to the favour of Heaven by his death and sufferings, and to propound pardon of sin and eternal life, to all who by a hearty belief in the Redeemer, attended with sincere repentance, and a holy life, were willing to entertain it. This doctrine he confirmed by miracles, which were beyond all powers and contrivances of art or nature, whereby he unanswerably demon-

* *Macrobii Saturnalia*, lib. 2. cap. 4. De jocis Augusti—Cum audisset inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum; ait, Melius est Herodis porcum esse quàm filium.

† See Chap. I. pag. 129.

demonstrated, *That he was a teacher come from God, and that no man could do those miracles which he did, except God were with him.* He owned, *That his kingdom was not of this world* ‡; and neither he, nor his immediate followers, did use any means of carnal policy to advance Christianity in the earth ||.

Because our Lord himself was in a little time to return back to heaven, he ordained twelve, whom he called Apostles, as his immediate delegates, to whom he committed his authority and power, furnished them with miraculous gifts, and left them to advance that excellent Religion he himself had begun. To their assistance he joined seventy disciples, as ordinary co-adjutors and companions to them. Their commission for the present was limited to *Palestine*, and they sent out *to seek and save the lost sheep of Israel*. How great the success of our Saviour's ministry was, may be guessed from that complaint of the *Pharisees*, *Behold, the world is gone after him* [*]. Multitudes of people from all parts did so flock after him, that they gave him not time for necessary solitude and retirement. *Indeed he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil; for God was with him* [†], and multitudes followed him from Galilee, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon [‡]. Even in these early times, Satan did fall as lightning from heaven [||].

Our Lord having spent something more than three years in the public exercise of his ministry, kept his last passover with his Apostles; which being done, he instituted the Sacrament of the Supper, consigning it to his Church as the standing memorial of his death, and the seal of the evangelic covenant, as he appointed Baptism to be the initiating seal thereof. Now the fatal hour was at hand, being betrayed by one of his own Apostles, he was apprehended by the officers, and brought before the

‡ John xviii. 36.

|| This is more fully illustrated by the Rev. Mr. Fleming in his *Loganthropos*, Book 3.

[‡] Mark iii. 8.

[*] John xii. 19.

[†] Acts x. 38.

[||] Luke x. 18.

the public tribunals. Heavy, but false were the accusations charged upon him. The two main articles of the charge were, *Blasphemy against God, and Treason against the Emperor*. Tho' they were not able to make any of them good by any tolerable pretence of proof, yet they sentenced and executed him upon the cross: *Pilate*, who condemned him, declaring *he found no fault in him**. And the centurion *glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man*†. Great miracles were then done to honour our suffering Redeemer‡; *The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose and came out of their graves, after his Resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many*. Now when the Centurion, and those who were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, *Truly this was the Son of God*. The third day after his interment, he rose again, appeared to, and conversed with his disciples and followers; and when he had taken care of his Church, and given a fuller commission and larger instructions to his Apostles, he took his leave of them, visibly ascending up into heaven, and sat down on the right-hand of God, as Head over all things, to the Church; Angels, Principalities, and Powers being made subject to him.

The faith of these passages concerning our Saviour's life, death and resurrection, is not only secured by the records of the evangelic historians, justified by authentic witnesses, the evidence of miracles, and the consent of all ages of the church, with other arguments of that kind; but as to the substance, it is also confirmed by the plain confession of heathens and Jews, enemies to Christianity; as we have before demonstrated, when discoursing of the truth of the Christian Religion in chapter first**, to which I now rather remit the reader, than here repeat what has been formerly advanced. But I may add, that *Eusebius* informs us ††, “That after our Lord's Ascension, *Pilate* accor-

* John xix. 4. † Luke xxiii. 47. ‡ Matth. xxviii. 51—55.

** See Chap. 1. pag. 128, &c. †† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 2.

“ according to custom, wrote an account to the Emperor
 “ *Tiberius* of our Lord’s Resurrection from the dead, and
 “ of his miracles that were famous over all *Palestine*, and
 “ that by many he was accounted to be God. Which
 “ *Tiberius* brought before the senate; but they rejected
 “ it, under pretence, that no cognizance had been taken
 “ of it before it came to them: for (says *Eusebius*) the
 “ cause of God needed no human approbation nor com-
 “ mendation.” For this he cites *Tertullian*, a person of
 good knowledge in the *Roman* laws, who in his *Apology*
for the Christians, (the place is still extant) writes*,
 “ That *Tiberius*, in whose time the name of *Christians*
 “ first entred into the world, having received informa-
 “ tion from *Palestine* in *Syria*, concerning the truth of
 “ the divinity that there appeared, brought the same
 “ into the senate by the privilege of his own vote. But
 “ the senate not having approved it, he continued of the
 “ same mind, and threatned death to any who accused
 “ the *Christians*.” Not only do *Eusebius* and *Tertullian*
 say the same in this matter, but also *Justin Martyr*,
 speaking concerning the death and sufferings of our Sa-
 viour, says†, *The Emperors might satisfy themselves of*
the truth of these things, from the Acts written under Pon-
tius Pilate. It appears to have been customary then in
 the *Roman* Empire, not only to preserve the acts of the
 senate, but also for the Governours of the provinces to
 keep a record of what memorable things happened in
 their government, the acts whereof they transmitted to
 the Emperor. Thus did *Pilate*, during his procurator-
 ship in his province. We may be persuaded *Tertullian*
 and *Justin Martyr*, who wrote in the time of the hot
 persecutions, when Paganism reigned in the empire,
 would never have appealed to such records, if they had
 not been extant in their time. Tho’ *Tiberius* was no re-
 ligious Prince, yet, as *Eusebius* observes‡, *Divine Pro-*
vidence put this into his mind to favour the Christians at this
junction,

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* Apolog. cap. 6. operum. pag. 23.

† Justin. Apolog. 2. pag. 96. Edit. 1686.

‡ Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 2.

junction, that the doctrine of the Gospel not being stopped nor hindered in the beginning, might run through the whole world.

After our Redeemer's Ascension to Heaven, from whence the next period of the Church begins, the Apostles began to execute the powers intrusted to them. They presently filled up the vacancy made by Judas the traitor, by the election of a new Apostle: *The lot falling upon Matthias, he was numbred with the eleven.* They being all endued with power from on high, as our Lord had promised, and furnished with miraculous gifts, set themselves to preach in places of greatest concourse, and in the face of their greatest enemies. They, who a while before fled at the approach of danger, now boldly plead the cause of their crucified master, with the immediate hazard of their lives. Great success did attend their ministry. By one sermon of the Apostle Peter, *were added to the Church about three thousand souls**. *There was a multitude of them that believed†.* By the hands of the Apostles *were many signs and wonders wrought among the people‡.* And believers *were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women||.* That nothing might interrupt them in this employment, they instituted the office of Deacons**, who might attend the inferior service of the Church, while the Apostles devoted themselves to what was more immediately necessary for the good of souls. By which prudent course innumerable converts were added to the Church.

A Persecution arising after Stephen's Martyrdom, the Church was scattered from Jerusalem. But this proved to advantage in the issue, Christianity being thus sooner spread up and down the neighbouring countries. Notwithstanding the rage of the persecution, the Apostles remained for a while at Jerusalem; only now and then dispatching some of their number to confirm the new converts in other places, and to propagate the faith, as the necessities of the Church required. Thus they continued near twelve years together, our Lord having com-

manded

* Acts ii. 41. † Ibid. iv. 32. ‡ Ibid. v. 12. || Ibid. 14.
 ** Ibid. vi.

manded them not to depart from *Jerusalem*, and the parts thereabout, till twelve years after his ascension ; as the ancient tradition, mentioned by *Apollonius* * and *Clemens Alexandrinus* † tells us. Then they thought it high time to apply themselves to the full execution of the commission Christ had given them, to go teach and baptize all nations ; and having settled the general affairs and concerns of the Church, they betook themselves to the several provinces of the *Gentile* world, preaching the Gospel to every nation under heaven. Thus their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. Innumerable multitudes of people, says *Eusebius* ‡, in all cities and countries, like corn into a well-filled granary, being brought in by the grace of God that brings salvation. They whose minds were heretofore distempered and over-run with the error and idolatry of their ancestors, were cured by the sermons and miracles of our Lord's disciples : so as shaking off those chains of darkness and slavery the merciless Dæmons had put upon them, they freely embraced and entertained the knowledge and service of the only true God, the great Creator of the world, whom they worshipped according to the rites and rules of that divine and wisely contrived religion which our Saviour had introduced.

'Tis not easy at this time of day to write an exact history of the apostolic age. Had we the writings of *Papias* Bishop of *Hierapolis*, scholar, says *Irenæus*, to *St. John*, the commentaries of *Hegesippus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*'s institutions, *Africanus*'s Chronology, and other writers about that time mentioned by the ancients, the relation might be more full : but alas ! these are perished in the common shipwreck with other old and useful books. *Dr. Cave*, among the moderns, in his *Antiquitates Apostolicæ*, gives the best account I have seen of the Apostles travels, the success of their ministry, the places and countries to which they went, the churches they planted, and their acts and martyrdoms. To his assistance I own myself obliged ; and from him and some others, so far as agreeing with sacred Scripture and Anti-

quity,

* Apud *Eusebium* in *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 5. cap. 18.

† *Stromatum* lib. 6. pag. 696. ‡ *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 2. cap. 3.

quity, I shall mention a few things to illustrate and set this affair in a clear light, still producing my vouchers. 'Tis true, some of these vouchers, such as *Dorotheus of Tyre*, and *Nicephorus Calistus*, lived at a great distance from the times of the Apostles, and especially the last of them; and he has many things fabulous not to be depended upon. But on the other hand, there are no authors extant who wrote a history of the church near the apostolic times; the first Ecclesiastic Historian that now remains being *Eusebius*, who wrote in the fourth century: and it appears agreeable to the commission Christ gave his Apostles, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47.* to believe they went and preached the Gospel to some other countries beside those named in the New Testament. Neither do I see how we can account for the great increase of Christianity mentioned by unquestionable authors of the second and third centuries, (of which I shall speak before I conclude this Chapter,) unless this be allowed. To be sure the Apostles and Apostolic Men were persons of an extraordinary spirit, extraordinary gifts, who had an amasing gift of speaking many languages, and a wonderful divine providence and blessing accompanied their labours; and therefore we are not immediately to reject every thing concerning their travels, labours, and success, as fabulous; which some authors incline to, because not writ by men in the same age wherein the Apostles lived, or because the like could not be done by men in the present age, who have not such a spirit and such gifts as the Apostles were endued with, provided always it be no way inconsistent with sacred Scripture.

Our Lord was faithful in appointing officers in his house, first Apostles; their name *Ἀπόστολοι* imports their mission, and answers the *Hebrew* word *Shiloh*, sent, *1 Kings xiv. 6.* *Ahijah was sent with heavy tidings.* Thus in the New Testament, *2 Cor. viii. 23.* *Ἀπόστολοι ἐκκλησιῶν* is rendred in our version, *the messengers of the churches.* As to the apostolic office, the characters or prerogatives thereof were these following. *First*, They were immediately called by Christ their Lord and Master.

*Paul is designed an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, Gal. i. 1. and we have the immediate call of all the rest of them, recorded oftner than once in the New Testament * ; and they were named Apostles by way of eminency. Secondly, They had infallible divine conduct in preaching and writing ; the spirit was promised to guide them into all truth, John xvi. 13. Hence, Thirdly, there was an exact harmony among them all in their doctrine ; these twelve stars did all shine with the same light conveyed to them by the sun of righteousness. Fourthly, They had all seen Christ in the flesh. Thus the Apostle John speaks, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, 1 John i. 1. The Apostle Peter says, We were eye-witnesses of his glory, 2 Pet. i. 16. and the Apostle Paul says, Last of all he was seen of me also, 1 Cor. xv. 8. Fifthly, Their commission was very universal, to go preach the Gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15. to teach and baptize all nations, Math. xxviii. 19. to preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 47. And therefore those authors are mistaken, who make the Apostles Bishops of any particular place, as Peter Bishop of Antioch or Rome, James Bishop of Jerusalem, John Bishop of Ephesus, &c. for the extent of places to which the Apostles went, did not change their rectoral power and jurisdiction over the whole Church ; their authority reached all Churches planted and to be planted in their time : and yet as to their ordinary power, they did neither claim nor exercise superiority over other ministers, but counted them brethren, partners, fellow-labourers, and themselves fellow-elders with them. Sixthly, Another character of the apostolic dignity, was a wonderful gift of miracles ; There appeared cloven tongues as of fire.—And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout*

* Matth. x. 1—6. Mark iii. 14—20. Luke vi. 13—17. Acts i. 26.

devout men, out of every nation under heaven,—and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in their own language, Acts ii. 3—6. By the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, Acts v. 12. They made the blind to see, the lame to walk, cured the sick, restored the dead to life, and dispossessed devils. These were the credential letters of the holy Apostles, which did demonstrate to all men, that God was with them in an extraordinary way, that by them he might build his Church, and propagate his kingdom over the world. *Seventhly*, Another character of their dignity, was the divine efficacy that attended their doctrine, to turn men *from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God*. They were truly *Boanerges, sons of thunder*; their tongues were like as of fire, to kindle among people a flame of divine love to our blessed Redeemer. By the sound of these trumpets the walls of *Jericho*, the fortresses, sin, Satan and the world had erected, did fall to the ground. *Eighthly*, The Apostles had a power of making laws and rules binding to the Church, being inspired and guided by the holy Spirit for this end: They did *sit on thrones judging the tribes of Israel*; they declared Christians to be free from the yoke of the ceremonial law; did intimate what ought to be the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Christian Church in all ages. They sometimes came with the rod, 1 Cor. iv. 21. striking *Elymas* with blindness, *Ananias* and *Sapphira* with death, calling out *Hymenæus*, and *Alexander*, and the incestuous person out of the Church, and appointing a heretic, after the first and second admonition, to be rejected. At other times they came with love, and in the spirit of meekness, beseeching, *as ambassadors for Christ, that ye may be reconciled to God*. *Ninthly*, Another character of the apostolic dignity, is, to write to Christian Churches Epistles, which were to be a part of the Canon of the Scripture, and a standing rule to the Church in all ages. *Paul* prefaceth almost all his Epistles with his apostolic power: so do *Peter*, *James*, *Jude* and *John*, or with words of the same import. The reader who desires a larger treatise of these characters,

may consult a dissertation of the learned *Spanhemius Filius*, as marked at the foot of the page.*

Tho' it was the principal duty of the Apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, to establish Christianity, and to govern the Church, yet they did not exercise this office in its full extent, till after our Lord's Resurrection; then they executed their commission, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* The *Jewish* Oeconomy was like the light at the window, which enlightens one house; but the Christian Oeconomy was as the light of the sun, to enlighten the world. The Apostles, in pursuance of their commission, in less than forty years after Christ's Ascension, went almost thro' the whole then known world, according to our Lord's prediction; *The Gospel of this kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*, Matth. xxiv. 14. that is, the end of the *Jewish* state. *Mahomet's* way was cut out by the sword, and his religion was calculated to satisfy men's brutish lusts. But the design of Christianity is to teach us to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

To understand the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Overthrow of Paganism, in the first age of the Christian Church, I conceive it will be necessary to give a view of the lives of the Apostles, who carried the name of Christ far and near, and made *Dagon fall before the ark*. I shall then endeavour to give a short account of them.

I begin with *Peter*, whom the catalogues in the Gospel name first of all the Apostles. He was born at *Bethsaida* in *Galilee*; the particular year of his birth cannot now be recovered, but some conceive it probable, that he was ten years of age, when our Saviour was born of the blessed Virgin. Being circumcised, he was called *Simon*. This name was not abolished by Christ, but additioned by the name of *Cephas*, which in *Syriac*, the vulgar language then

* Dissertatio de Apostolis duodecim institutis, & de Apostolatu strictè dicto. Spanhemii FF. operum Tom. 2. Col. 289, ——— 312.

then of the *Jews*, signifies a *stone* or *rock*, thence 'tis derived into the Greek Πέτρος, by us named *Peter*. The Popes usually change their names upon their advancement, which custom began *A. D.* 844. when *Peter de Bocca Porco*, i. e. *Swine's mouth*, on his election called himself *Sergius II.* yet none of them called themselves *Peter*. This Apostle's father was *Jonah*, probably a fisherman of *Bethsaida*, which signifies a *house of fishing*, or *ensnaring*. His brother was the Apostle *Andrew*, who is frequently by the ancients called πρωτοκλήτος, being the first of the Apostles who was converted and called to Christ, and was an instrument in *Peter's* conversion, *Job.* i. 40, 41. It is evident from the *Acts* of the Apostles*, that God honoured *Peter* to be an happy instrument to convert multitudes both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And indeed there is little certain concerning him, but what we have in the sacred Scripture.

The Papists build a great deal upon *Peter's* being named first in the lists of the Apostles, and especially that *Matthew* expresses it with a kind of emphasis πρώτος Σίμων, *first Simon*, *Matth.* x. 2. But this foundation will not bear the superstructure they rear upon it. The true reason of *Peter's* being always named first, seems to be †, that he was marked out by Christ, as the man that was to be first sent out and employed to begin the Gospel-Church. He did not only work the first miracle after Christ's ascension, *Acts* iii. 6. but also preach the first sermon, and that with such success, as to convert 3000 to the Church, *Acts* ii. 14—42. whereas before, the whole number of Christians, men and women, amounted only to about 120, *Acts* i. 15. of which the Apostles, with the LXX Disciples, made the greater part. And this same Apostle had the first commission to begin the *Gentile* Church, by preaching to *Cornelius* and his family, *Act.* chap. x. No wonder then if all the evangelical writers agree to place his name in the front of the list of the Apostles.

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* Chapters ii, iii, iv, v, ix, x, xi.

† Mr. *Fleming's* Loganthropos, Vol. 2. pag. 169.

It has been asserted by a multitude of popish writers, that this Apostle *Peter* was bishop at *Antioch* seven years, and at *Rome* 25 years. They tell us a great many things of his actings at *Rome*; of his debate with *Simon Magus*, and victory over him. Of his appointing his successor, but whether *Linus* or *Clement*, is not agreed; and of his martyrdom in the 13th year of the reign of *Nero*. But all these things seem to be false and without foundation; as appears, *first*, from the silence of *Luke*, the inspired writer of the *Acts* of the Apostles, who records many things concerning *Peter*, from the first to the sixteenth chapter of that book. He writes of his journey to *Lydda*, *Joppa*, *Cæsarea*, *Jerusalem*, and *Antioch*, but not one word of his going to *Rome* to found the Papal Chair. He speaks of the great things this Apostle had been honoured to do, as before observed, not only before *Paul's* conversion, but after it, even to the Synod at *Jerusalem*. He relates *Paul's* journey to *Rome*, and his meeting with the Christians there; but not one word of his meeting with *Peter*, the supposed bishop of that place. *Secondly*, Is it to be conceived, that when the Apostle *Paul*, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, chap. xvi. salutes the Christians and his Fellow-labourers there by their names, that he should not speak one word of this Apostle, if he had been there? If it be said, that he had fled from the city because of *Claudius's* persecution; this is alledged without any ground. Why should they make their first bishop a non-resident till the second year of *Nero*, or fifty-eighth after Christ's birth, when, according to *Baronius*, this Epistle to the *Romans* was writ? Besides, why does *Paul*, when commending the faith of the *Romans*, speak nothing of the founder of their Church? Add to all this, That *Paul* in all his Epistles written from *Rome*, tho' he speaks of *Aristarchus*, *Marcus*, *Luke*, *Demas*, and others, yet not one word of *Peter* there*. *Thirdly*, *Peter* himself speaks not one word of what the papists alledge. If he had founded the *Roman Church*, why does he nowhere make mention of it? Why does he, when writing to the dispersed *Jews*, nowhere assert his prerogative?

* See Col. Chap. iv. 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17.

tive? Why, when exhorting the elders, 1 *Pet.* v. 1. does he say only, *I who am also an elder*, συμπρεσβύτερος? If he was absent from *Rome* so long as our adversaries own, why does he never write to his flock, to strengthen and encrease their faith? *Fourthly*, The story which the Papists alledge, is inconsistent with the sacred chronology, or account of these times: For, from the time of Christ's death, in the 18th year of *Tiberius*, to the 13th year of *Nero*, when *Peter* was crucified, are only 36 years, viz. 5 in *Tiberius's* reign, 4 in *Caligula's*, 14 in *Claudius's*, and 13 in *Nero's*. Now *Peter* did not stir a foot out of *Judæa*, till 12 years after our Lord's death; then he was cast into prison by *Herod*, *Act.* ch. xii. which was the fourth year of the Emperor *Claudius*, and the last of King *Agrippa*. Six years after that, or the eighteenth after Christ's Crucifixion, we find him present at a Synod at *Jerusalem*, *Act.* chap. xv. and after this, according to our adversaries, he was seven years at *Antioch*, so as there remain only eleven years in which he could possibly be at *Rome*. And indeed there is no solid evidence he was there at all. For, *Fifthly*, *Peter* being the Apostle of the Circumcision, *Galat.* ii. 7, 8. we have more reason to believe, that when *Paul* was carried to *Rome*, he visited the *Jews* dispersed in *Greece*, *Thracia*, the *Lesser Asia*, *Babylon*, and the *East*, and gained a great harvest among them, even to the day of his death.

Against these arguments there can be no just objection. For tho' this Apostle, 1 *Pet.* v. 13. says, *The Church that is at Babylon saluteth you*; yet this *Babylon* is not *Rome*. True it is, that *John* in the book of the Revelation, writing prophetically of the corrupt and idolatrous state of the Church of *Rome*, compares her to *Babylon*; but here *Peter* writes plainly and historically of *Babylon* in the *East*, once the Head of the *Assyrian* Empire, where there was so great a concourse of *Jews*, as that afterward in that place they framed the *Babylonish Talmud*. Tho' many of the ancients have given some ground for this story, yet it flows originally only from *Papias*, called

Bishop of *Hierapolis*, as cited by *Eusebius**, for *Papias*'s books are lost. But if they were extant, according to the same *Eusebius*†, the author of them was but a person of a mean character, a rude, simple, and vain man, who believed and reported things upon common tradition, even things that were μυθικώτερα, liker to fables than truths. He was a Millenary, and introduced fabulous stories into the Church, which a multitude of writers after him have licked up. Those who desire to see this question more fully examined, and the opinion I have advanced confirmed, may consult the Authors cited at the foot of the page‡. After all, tho' it should be granted that *Peter* had been at *Rome*, or had died or suffered martyrdom there, this is no reason for asserting his Primacy or Episcopacy in that city, more than at *Joppa*, *Antioch* or *Babylon*. But leaving *Peter*, I proceed to

Paul the Apostle. He was born at *Tarsus*, the metropolis of *Cilicia*, a city rich and populous, privileged with the immunities of *Rome*, *Acts* xxii. 25—28. He was of Jewish parents, of the tribe of *Benjamin*, trained up in his younger years in liberal arts, and also in the occupation of a tent-maker. The Jews say, *He who learns not his son a trade, learns him to be a thief*. When he came to riper years, he was sent to be educated at *Jerusalem*, under the care of *Gamaliel*, of the Sect of the *Pharisees*, and became a zealous persecutor of the Christians. But by the rich and free Grace of God, he was wonderfully converted, which some conceive was in the second year after our Lord's Passion. But the learned *Spanhemius* inclines to fix it in the eighth year from Christ's death, the third of the reign of the Emperor *Claudius*||. Then was he called to bear Christ's name to the Gentiles, and Kings, and Children of Israel, *Acts* ix. 15. and was eminently successful in that work. Being remarkably preserved from the evil designs the Jews had against his life, *Acts* ix. 23—25. he preaches at

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 15. † Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 39.

‡ Spanhemii FF. operum Tom. 2. Col. 331—388. Turretin. Theo. Elen. Vol. 3. pag. 188, & seqq. and others.

|| Spanhemii operum Tom. 2. Col. 312. de Conversionis Paulinæ epocha.

at *Antioch* a whole year. Here the disciples were, as by divine appointment, called *Christians*, for the word *χρηματίζω*, in *Acts* xi. 26. imports so much, and *χρηματισμός*, *Rom.* xi. 4. is the *Answer of God*. After this, he preached at *Salamis* in the isle of *Cyprus*, and in several parts of the *Lesser Asia*, as at *Perga* and *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, *Acts* ch. xiii. where, because the *Jews* rejected the offers of Grace, according to the tenor of his commission, he turned to the *Gentiles*. Thereafter he preached at *Derbe* and *Lystra*, cities of *Lycaonia*, *Acts* ch. xiv. and in all these places he had many converts. After the Synod at *Jerusalem*, we find him preaching at *Thessalonica*, and at *Athens*, where he found an altar to an unknown God, *Acts* xvii. 23. Dr. *Cave*, from *Œcumenius* and *Jerom*, has the inscription thereof thus* : *Θεοῖς Ἀσίας καὶ Εὐρώπης καὶ Λιβύης, θεῷ ἀγνώστῳ καὶ ξένῳ*, that is, *To the Gods of Asia, Europe and Africa, to the unknown and strange God*.

By *Paul's* preaching at *Corinth* many believed and were baptized, *Acts* xviii. 8. Thence he sailed to *Ephesus*, a place famous for idolatry and magick; hence *Ἐφεσίων γράμματα* for *mystical spells*, by which they used to heal diseases, and drive away evil spirits, of which *Clemens* of *Alexandria* and *Josephus* † do speak. Here the Gospel had such success, as many believed, confessed their sins, and were ashamed of their evil deeds. Many also who used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver: *Acts* xix. 18, 19, which is reckoned in our money 1500 *lib. Sterl.* These converts thus declared, they abhorred their former magical rites, whereby they had served the devil, and would for ever abandon them. This was a trophy of the victory of the kingdom of Christ over heathenish idolatry.

Our Apostle after this resolved to go up to *Jerusalem*, and carry some charitable collections for poor Christians there. Some *Jews*, who had come from *Asia*, finding him

* *Lives of the Apostles*, pag. 59.
† *Stromatum* lib. 1. *Antiq.* lib. 8.

him in the temple raised a tumult, laid hold on him, and called the rest of the *Jews* to their assistance, telling them, *This was the fellow who every where vented doctrines destructive to the institutions of the law and purity of that place, which he profaned, by bringing in uncircumcised Greeks into it.* And they had gone near to have dispatched him, if the chief captain *Claudius Lysias*, who commanded the *Roman* garrison in the tower of *Antonia*, had not delivered him from their hands, supposing him to be more than an ordinary person. *Paul* in his own defence made an excellent speech, *Acts* xxii. declaring his education in the rites of the *Jewish* religion, and his zeal for it; and there gives a punctual relation of the manner of his conversion, and that he had received the command of God to depart from *Jerusalem*, and preach to the *Gentiles*. When his enemies heard this, they could hold no longer; they cried, *Away with this fellow from the earth, 'tis not fit he should live.* To avoid their fury, the captain of the guard commanded him to be brought to the castle, and examined by whipping: But the Apostle did plead his privilege as a *Roman* citizen, that he could not be bound and scourged. Of this privilege *Cicero* speaks plainly (his words I subjoin at the foot of the page *) as tending to set in a clear light this or the like passage. Upon this score his adversaries gave over the design of whipping him; the commander himself being a little startled, that he had bound and chained a denizen of *Rome*. Next day the governour commanded his chains to be knock'd off, and brought *Paul* before the *Sanhedrim*, where he justified himself, saying, *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day, Acts* xxiii. 2, &c. Religion and a good conscience begets heaven in a man's bosom. Five days after this comes down *Ananias* the high-

* *Cicero* in *Verrem*, lib. 5. Orat. 10. operum pag. m. 378. *Cadebatur virgis in medio foro Messana civis Romanus, judices; cum interea nullus gemitus istius miseri,---- nisi hac, civis Romanus sum.---- O nomen dulce libertatis! O jus eximium nostrae civitatis! O lex Porcia, legesque Semproniae.* Ibid. pag. 379. *Facinus est, vinciri civem Romanum: scelus, verberari: propè parricidium, necari: quid dicam in crucem tollere? verbo satis digno tam nefaria res appellari nullo modo potest.*

high-priest, with some of the *Sanhedrim*, to *Cæsarea*, accompanied with *Tertullus* their advocate, who in a neat, but short speech, accused *Paul* of *sedition, heresy, and profaning the temple*, *Acts xxiv. 2—6*. As to the charge of sedition, the Apostle flatly denied it; as to heresy, he confessed, *after the manner they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers*. As to profaning the temple, that his design in coming to *Jerusalem* was to bring charitable contributions to his distressed brethren; that he was in the temple neither with multitude nor tumult. *Felix* continued *Paul* a prisoner two years, and being himself displaced by the Emperor *Nero*, to gratify the *Jews* he left him still in prison. *Porcius Festus* having succeeded governour of the province, the *Jews* renew their accusation against *Paul* before him, *Acts xxv*. but were not able to bring any proof: however *Festus*, to oblige the *Jews*, when entering on his government, asked, *if he would go and be tried at Jerusalem?* The Apostle, understanding the consequence of that proposal, pleaded, That being a *Roman* citizen, he ought to be judged by their laws, and made formally his appeal to *Cæsar*, which *Festus* received. *Agrippa*, who succeeded *Herod* as Tetrarch of *Galilee*, being come with his sister *Bernice* to visit this new governour, and desiring to hear and see *Paul*, at *Festus's* command he was brought forth. Being permitted to speak, he made an excellent apology for himself and the *Christian Religion*, *Acts xxvi*. which almost persuaded *Agrippa* to be a *Christian*. It being finally resolved *Paul* should be sent to *Rome*, he, with some other prisoners of note, were committed to the charge of *Julius*, commander of a company belonging to the legion of *Augustus*. In *September A.D. 56*, or as others *57*, they proceeded in their voyage; the particulars whereof being described by the inspired historian, *Acts xxvii, xxviii*, I here omit them. *Publius* the governour of the island *Melite*, now called *Malta*, courteously entertained *Paul* three days; his father was then sick of a fever and flux, *Paul* laid his hands upon him, and healed him and many of the inhabitants, which made them heap honours upon him: yea, *Publius* himself is said by some authors

to have been converted to the Christian Faith, and made bishop of the island *. The Apostle being come to *Rome*, he lived two years in his own hired house, where he preached without interruption to all who came to him, and with good success. We find in the last chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans* the names of several Christian converts, and in *Philip. iv. 22.* the Apostle says, *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cesar's household.* And therefore we may observe, that antiquity speaks of some converts of better quality, even belonging to the court it self, among which the *Roman* martyrology reckons *Torpes*, an officer of prime note in *Nero's* palace †, and afterward a martyr for the faith; and one of that prince's concubines, supposed to be *Poppæa Sabina*, to whom *Tacitus* gives this character ||, *That she wanted nothing to render her to be one of the most accomplished ladies in the world, but a chaste and virtuous mind.* I know not how far it may countenance her conversion, at least her inclination to a better religion than Heathenism, that *Josephus* ‡ calls her a pious woman, and that she effectually solicited the cause of the *Jews* with her husband; and in his own life he speaks of further favours he received from her at *Rome* ††. I find also *Tacitus* mentions a noble woman called *Pomponia Græcina*, *superstitionis externæ rea*, that is, guilty of foreign superstition **; by which we may guess, that he means she was a Christian. But we have a more sure account in the inspired writings of this Apostle, of his converting *Onesimus* that had cheated his master *Philemon*, and run away from him; but upon his conversion he became faithful to his master, and is kindly recommended to him by *Paul* || ||.

After two years custody at *Rome*, the Apostle being restored to liberty, and minding his commission to the *Gentiles*, he prepared himself for a greater circuit; tho' what way he directed his course, is not absolutely certain.

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* Spondani epitome annalium Baronii ad annum Christi 58. pag. m. 96.

† Ad diem Maii 17. pag. 308.

|| Annalium, lib. 13. cap. 45. pag. m. 298. ‡ Antiq. lib. 20. cap. 7.

†† In vita sua, non longè ab initio.

** Annalium lib. 13. pag. m. 290. || || Epistle to Philemon.

Tis probable he preached both in the eastern and western parts of the world; for *Clemens, Paul's* contemporary, in his excellent epistle to the *Corinthians*, tells us *, *That Paul being seven times cast into chains, having suffered whipping and stoning, gained the reward of his patience. He preached the Gospel both in the east and west; he taught righteousness to the whole world, and went to the utmost bounds of the west, (ἐπὶ τὸ τέλος τῆς δύσεως, by which some understand Britain) and having suffered martyrdom under the emperors, he departed out of this world into a happy place, leaving the greatest example of patience.* He intended once and again to go to Spain, *Rom. xv. 24, 28.* and probably did go thither. *Theodoret* informs us, *That he brought the Gospel to the isles of the sea †, by which he seems to intend Britain.* He returned to Rome about the eighth or ninth year of *Nero's* reign, where he was cast into prison, and suffered martyrdom.

Andrew the Apostle was born at *Bethsaida*, a city of *Galilee*, standing on the banks of the lake *Genesareth*; he was son to *John* or *Jonas*, a fisherman there, and brother to *Simon Peter*, but whether elder or younger, is not certain; probably younger. He seems to have been a disciple of *John the Baptist*, upon whose testimony concerning our Lord, *Behold the lamb of God, &c.* *Andrew*, and another disciple, who seems to have been *John* the Apostle, follow our Saviour to the place of his abode, *John i. 37—40.* Upon this account by the ancients he is frequently called *πρωτοκλήτος*, that is, *the first called.* After some converse, he acquaints his brother *Simon*, and they both come to Christ. About a year after this our Lord passing through *Galilee*, found them fishing on the sea of *Tiberias*, and calls them to be fishers of men, *Matth. iv. 19. Mark i. 16, 17.* that is, to convert men by the efficacy of the doctrine he was to preach to the world, commanding them *to follow him*; and accordingly they left all, and followed him. Little more is recorded of him in the sacred History. After our Lord's ascension to heaven, when the Holy Ghost had been plentifully poured out upon the Apostles, to qualify them to subdue the world to Christ, by the preaching

* Pag. m. 14. † In 2 Tim. iv. 16.

preaching of the Gospel, and to root out profaneness and idolatry; 'tis affirmed by the ancients, that the Apostles agreed among themselves, or by lot, as some authors say*, what part of the world each should take. In this partition, *Andrew* had *Scythia* and its neighbouring countries for his share. He passed along the *Euxine* Sea, called once *Axenus*†, for the inhospitable humour of the people, who used to sacrifice strangers, and to drink out of their skulls. Having travelled over many of the *Scythian* regions, and converted many to the Christian Faith, he returned to *Byzantium*, since called *Constantinople*, where he instructed the people in the knowledge of the Christian Religion, founded a church for divine worship, and ordained *Stachys*, whom *Paul* calls his beloved *Stachys*, first bishop of that place‖. Here he is said to have preached the Gospel two years with good success, converting many to the Christian Faith. Afterward he travelled over *Thrace*, *Macedonia*, *Thessaly*, *Achaia*; *Nazianzen* adds *Epirus*‡. In all which places, for many years, he preached and propagated Christianity, confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles, and gave his last testimony to the truth, by suffering martyrdom at *Patrae* in *Achaia*, being there crucified by order of *Ægeas* king of the *Edeffenes*, says *Dorotheus* bishop of *Tyre*** . *Nicephorus* tells us††, *That the crime objected against him was, That he had persuaded Maximilla the king's wife, and Stratocles his brother, to embrace the Christian Faith, and abhor impiety.* *Bernard* says, *That St. Andrew was led to his execution with a composed mind; when he came within sight of the cross, his body did not tremble, his face grew not pale; but said he had long desired that happy hour, the cross had been consecrated by the body of Christ, and he came joyfully to it, as a disciple and follower of him, expecting to be brought safe to his master.* The church of *Rome* celebrate his memory on the 30th of *November*‖‖: But in what year he suffered, is not recorded.

James

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 1. † Strabo Geog. lib. 7. pag. 206.

‖ Niceph. Calistus, Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 39. ‡ Orat. 25. pag. 438.

** In Synopsi. †† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 39.

‖‖ Passio St. Andreæ apud Surium ad diem Novembris 30. pag. 653.

James surnamed the great, either for his age, being elder than the other *James*, or for some peculiar honours conferred upon him by our Lord ; was by birth a *Galilean*, partner with *Peter* in the trade of fishing, from which our Lord called him to be one of his disciples, *Mark* i. 19, 20. He cheerfully complied with the call, leaving all to follow him. Soon after this he was called from the station of an ordinary disciple to the apostolic office, and honoured with some peculiar acts of favour, beyond most of the rest of his equals. He with *Peter*, and *John* his brother, were taken to see the miraculous raising of *Jairus's* daughter ; were admitted to Christ's glorious transfiguration on the mount ; and taken along with him to the garden, to be witnesses to those bitter sufferings he there endured for us, the better to encourage them under, and prepare them for their own trials. We have no certain account what became of him immediately after our Saviour's ascension. *Jerom* tells us *, that he preached to the dispersed *Jews*, by which he probably means the *Jewish* converts, dispersed after the death of *Stephen*. And we may conclude, that since the Apostles, after our Lord's ascending up on high, staid several years together at *Jerusalem*, or in the bounds of *Judæa* ; and since *James* lived so short a while, it is utterly improbable that he went either to *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Britain*, or *Ireland*, to plant Christianity ; however some *Spanish* and other monastic writers affirm it. As to his sufferings, *Herod Agrippa*, son of *Aristobulus*, grandchild to *Herod* the Great, being made king over *Judæa*, through the favour of *Claudius Cæsar*, to make himself popular with the *Jews*, raised a persecution against the Christians, and killed this Apostle *James*, the brother of *John*, with the sword, *Acts* xii. 2. *Eusebius*, from *Clemens* of *Alexandria* tells us †, “ That as he was led to the place of martyr-
“ dom, the officer that guarded him, or his accuser, says
“ *Suidas* ‖, being convinced of the evil he had done, con-
“ fessed himself to be a Christian, and begged this Apo-
“ stle would pardon him ; who after a little pause, kissed
“ him,

* De scriptoribus, in *Jacobo*.

‖ In voce *ἡρώδης*.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 9.

“ him, saying, *Peace be to thee*; and both were be-
 “ headed.” Divine vengeance suffered not his death to
 be long unrevenged: For the inspired writer assures us,
Acts xii. 21—23. “ That upon a set day, *Herod* ar-
 “ rayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made
 “ an oration, and the people gave a shout, saying, it is
 “ the voice of a God, and not of a man; and immediately
 “ the Angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not
 “ God the glory; and he was eaten of worms, and gave
 “ up the ghost.” *Josephus* the *Jewish* historian, who
 might himself remember it, being then a youth of seven
 or eight years of age, sets down the story with these cir-
 cumstances ‡. “ *Herod* removed to *Cæsarea*, having en-
 “ ded the third year of his government over all *Judæa*.
 “ While there, he proclaimed solemn fights and festival
 “ entertainments in honour of *Cæsar*, to which flocked
 “ many nobility and a croud of people; on the second
 “ day he came with great state to the theatre, to make
 “ an oration to the people, clothed in a robe curiously
 “ wrought over with silver, which encountring with the
 “ beams of the rising sun, reflected such a lustre, as be-
 “ gat some veneration in the multitude, who cried out,
 “ as prompted by flatterers, that it was some Deity they
 “ beheld; which impious applause *Herod* received with-
 “ out any dislike: but a sudden accident changed the
 “ scene; looking up, he saw an owl sitting on a rope over
 “ his head, which he presently own’d as a fatal messen-
 “ ger of his death, as before it had been of his success.
 “ A melancholy seized his mind, and exquisite torments
 “ on his bowels; *Behold*, says he, *the Deity you admired*,
 “ *I’m commanded to die; a fatal necessity convinceth you*
 “ *of flattery and falshood; he whom you saluted as immortal,*
 “ *is hurried to death!* Being removed to his palace, his
 “ pains increased on him, tho’ the people prayed for his
 “ life and health, yet his acute torments prevailed, and
 “ after five days put a period to his life.” To return,
 tho’ the Apostle *James* was beheaded, yet *the Word of*
God grew and multiplied, *Acts* xii. 24.

John

 ‡ *Antiquitat. lib. 19. cap. 7.*

John the Apostle was a *Galilean*, the son of *Zebedee* and *Salome*, the younger brother of *James*. Before his coming to Christ, he seems to have been for some time the disciple of *John the Baptist*, being probably that other disciple who was with *Andrew*, when they left the *Baptist* to follow our Saviour. So particularly does he relate all the circumstances of that transaction, tho' modestly, as in other parts of the Gospel, concealing his own name. He was at the same time with his brother called to be a Disciple and an Apostle, *Mark* i. 19, 20. He was by far the youngest of all the Apostles, as the ancients affirm, and his great age seems to prove it; for he lived near 70 years after our Saviour's death. Many passages concerning him in the sacred Scriptures are recorded, in conjunction with his brother *James*. He was the Disciple whom Jesus loved, that is, treated with more freedom and familiarity than the rest, being acquainted with the most private passages of his life; and he had some instances of particular kindness conferred upon him, lying in our Saviour's bosom, or leaning toward his breast at the Paschal Supper. He was also very constant in his affection to our Lord, staying with him when the rest deserted him. Indeed upon our Lord's first apprehension he fled, as the other Apostles. But 'tis not improbable, that soon after his master was seized, he was the young man who followed him, *having a linnen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men* [the officers] *laid hold on him, and he left the linnen cloth and fled from them naked*, *Mark* xiv. 51, 52. Tho' he fled at present to avoid the sudden violence offered him, yet he soon recovered himself, and returned back to seek his master, confidently entering the high-priest's hall, and waited upon him, and for any thing we know, was the only Apostle that did so. At the crucifixion he owned him in the midst of arms, guards, and thickest crowds of inveterate enemies. Our Redeemer, by his last testament on the Cross, appointed him guardian of his own mother the blessed Virgin, *John* xix. 26, 27. *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold thy son! and to the*
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disciple,

disciple, Behold thy mother ! and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. Her husband *Joseph* being some time before this dead, this Apostle made her a principal part of his charge and care. At the first news of our Lord's Resurrection, he with *Peter* did haste to the sepulchre. These two seem to have been very intimate. After Christ's Ascension, we find them going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, *Acts* iii. and miraculously healing the impotent cripple. They both preached to the people, and were both apprehended together by the Priests and Sadducees, and thrown into prison, *Acts* iv. and next day brought forth to plead their cause before the Sanhedrim. These two were chosen to go to *Samaria* to confirm the plantations *Philip* had made in these parts, *Acts* viii. 13, 14. where they confounded and baffled *Simon Magus*, and exhorted him to repentance. To them also *Paul* addressed himself, as those who seem'd to be pillars; who when they perceived the grace that was given to him, they gave him and *Barnabas* the right-hand of fellowship, that they should go unto the heathen, *Gal.* ii. 9. They confirmed their mission to the *Gentiles*.

In the division of the provinces the Apostles made among themselves, the lesser *Asia* fell to *John's* share, tho' he did not presently enter upon this charge, for probably he dwelt still at his own house at *Jerusalem*, till the death of the blessed Virgin, which is reckoned by *Eusebius* to have happened in the 48th year from Christ's birth*. After this he applied himself to the Propagation of Christianity in *Asia*, preaching it where it had not taken place, and confirming it where it was already planted. His chief residence is said to have been at *Ephesus*. Nor can we suppose that he confined his ministry to *Asia Minor*, but that he preached also in other parts of the East, probably in *Parthia*; his first Epistle being anciently entitled to them. And the *Jesuits* in the relation of their success in these parts, tell us †, That the *Bassoræ*, a people in *India*, constantly affirm from a tradition of their ancestors, That *St. John* planted the Christian

* In Chronico ad Annum Christi 48.

† Literæ Jesuitarum, anno 1555.

Christian Faith there. Having spent several years in this work, he was accused to *Domitian* the Emperor, author of the second persecution against the Christians, as an asserter of impiety, and a subverter of the religion of the empire. By his command the Pro-consul of *Asia* sent him prisoner to *Rome*, where *Tertullian* says*, *He was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil; but God who preserved the three children in the fiery furnace, preserved him, and brought him safe out of it, and he was presently ordered to be transported to the disconsolate Island Patmos in the Archipelago; where he wrote his Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, and there remained several years; instructing the inhabitants in the Faith of Christ. God conversed with him by heavenly visions, when he was cut off from ordinary conversation with men. When Domitian was carried off by death, Cocceius Nerva succeeded in the empire, who being of a more sober temper, recalled those whom the fury of his predecessor had sent into banishment. John returned into Asia the lesser, and resided at Ephesus. There he wrote his Gospel, and lived to the time of the Emperor Trajan. About the beginning of his reign he departed this life very aged, about the 98th or 99th year of his life, tho' Dorotheus † makes him much older.*

Philip was born at *Bethsaida*, near the sea of *Tiberias*, the city of *Andrew* and *Peter*. Of his parents and trade the Gospel takes no notice, tho' probably he was a fisherman, the general trade of that place. He was among the first who was called to be a Disciple and an Apostle, *Joh. i. 43—47.* We have but a few passages relating to him in the history of the Gospel ‡. In the distribution of the several provinces made by the Apostles, tho' no mention be made by *Eusebius* what share fell to *Philip*, yet we are told by others ||, that the *Upper-Asia* was his province, and that he preached and planted Christianity in *Scythia*, where he applied himself with great diligence

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and

* De præscrip. hæret. cap. 36. pag. m. 240. Percurre Ecclesias Apostolicas—Habes Romam ubi Apostolus Joannes, postquam in oleum igneum demersus, nihil passus est, in insulam relegatur, † In Synopsi.

‡ See *Joh. vi. 5. xii. 22. iv. 8.*

|| *Simeon Metaphrastes apud Surium ad 1. diem Maii. Cave's Antiq. Apostolicæ,*

and industry, to recover men out of the snare of the devil, by the embracing of the truth. By the constancy of his preaching, and efficacy of his doctrine, he gained many converts, whom he baptized into the profession of the Christian Faith, at once curing both their souls and their bodies; their souls of error and idolatry, and their bodies of infirmities and distempers; healing diseases, dispossessing *Dæmons*, settling Churches, and appointing them guides and ministers to oversee them. Having for many years successfully managed the apostolic office, in the last period of his life he came to *Hierapolis* in *Phrygia*, a city rich and populous, but mad upon idolatry. Among the rest of their vain deities, *Nicephorus* reports *,

“ That they worshipped a serpent or dragon, kept it in
 “ a temple, and offered sacrifices to it. When *Philip*,
 “ with his sister *Mariamne*, a virgin who accompanied
 “ him, came there, by prayer to God he obtained that
 “ this famed serpent vanished, and its worshippers were
 “ ashamed; and by his exhortations, accompanied with
 “ divine power, he prevailed with many to renounce
 “ idolatry, and embrace the Christian Religion. *Satan*,
 “ enraged at this overthrow, uses his old methods of
 “ persecution; the magistrates of the city seize the
 “ Apostle, and hanged him by the neck against a
 “ pillar.”

That *Bartholomew* was one of the Apostles, is evident from the sacred history of the New Testament, where his name is frequently recorded among the rest †, tho' there is little notice taken of him under that name. Hence some suppose he is the same with *Nathanael*. What renders this more specious, is, that as *John* never mentions *Bartholomew* in the number of the Apostles, so the other Evangelists never take notice of *Nathanael*, and we find *Nathanael* reckoned with the other Apostles, to whom our Lord appeared at the sea of *Tiberias*, *Joh. xxi. 1, 2*. If it be so, he was by birth of *Cana in Galilee*. We have an account of his conversion, when our Lord calls him an Israelite indeed, a man in whom is no guile, *Joh. i. 47—49*. He being convinced of our Lord's Divinity

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 39.

† Matth. x. 3. Mark iii. 18. Luke vi. 14. Acts i. 13.

nity by his converse with him, makes this confession, *Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel.* Concerning this Apostle's travels up and down the world to propagate the Christian Faith, we have but short hints from the ancients. 'Tis agreed that he went as far as *India*, that is *India* on this side the *Ganges*. *Socrates* * says, *It was India bordering upon Æthiopia*, meaning no doubt the *Asian Æthiopia*. *Jerom* calls it † *the fortunate India*, and tells us, *he left behind him the Gospel according to Matthew*; of which *Eusebius* gives this account ‡, *That when Pantæus, an eminent philosopher, and good Christian, the master of Clemens of Alexandria, from holy zeal to propagate Christianity, went to the East, he came as far as India, where he found the Gospel according to Matthew writ in Hebrew Letters, left there by Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, who had preached to these countries.* After this Apostle's labours in the East, he returned to the more western and northern parts of *Asia*. He was with *Philip* at *Hierapolis* in *Phrygia*, instructing that people in the principles of Christianity, and convincing them of the folly of their idolatry. "The magistrates enraged, designed him to martyrdom; but when they heard, that divine justice would revenge his death, and did feel some symptoms thereof, by the beginnings of an earthquake, they embraced the Christian Faith, says *Nicephorus* ||, and loosed the Apostle from his chains." After this he went to *Lycæonia*, where he instructed the people in the Christian Religion. His last removal was to *Albanople* in *Armenia* the Great, a place overgrown with idolatry; from which when he sought to recover the people, he was by the governour of the place commanded to be crucified **, which he chearfully underwent, comforting and confirming the converted Gentiles to the last minute of his life. Heretics have persecuted his memory after his death, no less than heathens did his person when alive, fathering a fabu-

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* Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 19.

† De Scriptoribus in Bartholomæo.

‡ Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 10. || Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 39.

** Hieronymus de Scriptoribus. Dorotheus in Synopsi de 12 Apostolis.

lous Gospel upon his name, altogether unworthy of him ; which, with others of that stamp, is justly condemned as apocryphal.

Matthew called also *Levi*, tho' a *Roman* officer, yet was an *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, both his names speaking him purely of *Jewish* extract. He seems to have been a *Galilean*, the son of *Alpheus* and *Mary*, sister or kinswoman to the blessed *Virgin*. His trade was a publican or tax-gatherer to the *Romans*, an office of bad report among the *Jews*, being not only a grievance to their purses, but also an affront to the liberty of their nation. Our Lord having cured a famous *Paralytic*, retired out of *Capernaum* to walk by the sea-side, where he taught the people who flocked after him. Here he saw *Matthew* sitting in his custom-office, whom he called to come and follow him*. The man was rich, had a gainful trade, and was a prudent person: he understood he must exchange wealth for poverty, gainful masters for a despised Saviour ; yet he left all his interests and relations to become our Lord's Disciple. He entertained him at a dinner in his house, to which he invited several Publicans of his own profession, hoping they might be converted by our Lord's converse and company. After his election to the Apostolate, he continued with the rest till our Saviour's Ascension, and then for the first eight years at least preached up and down *Judæa*. About this time he wrote his History of the Gospel, tho' some of the ancients say, he wrote the same in *Hebrew*. I see no solid evidence for this, it flows originally from the testimony of *Papias*, cited by *Eusebius* †. Now *Papias*'s writings are all lost, and tho' extant, *Eusebius* in the same place, owns he was one who reported things as told him by tradition, and wrote *τινὰ μυθικώτερα*, things liker to fables than truths. And there is no reason to question but the *Greek* copy of this Gospel in the sacred Canon is authentic. Little certainty can now be had, what travels this Apostle underwent for advancing the Christian Faith. *Æthiopia* is generally assigned as the province where

* Matth. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14—27. Luke v. 27—31.

† Hist. Ecc. lib. 3. cap. 39.

where he laboured *. *Metaphrastes* says, That he went first into Parthia; and having successfully planted Christianity in these parts, he thence travelled into Æthiopia †; that is the Asiatic lying near India. By preaching and miracles he mightily triumphed over error and idolatry, convinced and converted multitudes, ordained spiritual guides and pastors to confirm and build them up, and bring over others to the faith, and then finished his course. 'Tis probable, as an ancient writer at the foot of the Page ‡ affirms, that he suffered martyrdom at Naddabar, a city in Æthiopia, but by what kind of death is uncertain. *Dorotheus* || says, He died, and was honourably buried at Hierapolis in Parthia.

Thomas, according to the Syriac import of his name, was called *Didymus*, which signifies a Twin. The history of the Gospel takes no particular notice either of the country or kindred of this Apostle. That he was a Jew is certain, and in all probability a Galilean. We have only a few passages in the Gospel concerning him **. After our Lord's ascending to heaven, and the miraculous gifts poured down upon the Apostles, the province said to be assigned to *Thomas* was Parthia ††. *Jerom* says ‡‡, The Apostle *Thomas*, as we are informed by tradition, preached the Gospel of our Lord to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Caramans, Hyrcanians, Bactrians and Magians; and died in the city Calamin in India. *Nicephorus* says |||, That he was at first unwilling to venture himself into these countries, fearing he should find their manners as rude and intractable as their faces were black and deformed, till encouraged by a vision, that assured him of the divine presence. He travelled a great way into these eastern countries, as far as the island *Taprobane* (which some alledge is that now called *Sumatra*) and even

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* Apud Surium ad diem 21. Septembris, Vol. 3. pag. 217.

† Socrates, lib. 1. cap. 19.

‡ Venantius Fortunatus de spe vitæ æternæ.

Inde triumphantem fert India Bartholomæum,
Matthæum eximium Naddabar alta virum.

|| In Synopsi. ** Matth. x. 3. John xi. 16. xiv. 5. and xx. 24—30.

†† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 1. ‡‡ De Scriptoribus in Thoma.

||| Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 40.

to the country of the *Brachmans*, preaching every where with all the arts of mild persuasives, and calmly instructing them in the principles of Christianity. By these means he brought the people over from the grossest idolatry to the hearty belief and entertainment of religion. *Dorotheus* Bishop of *Tyre* has the same things concerning this Apostle's preaching, as *Jerom*; and as to his death, he says, *That Thomas was killed at Calamin, a city of India, by a lance, and is there honourably buried* *.

When the *Portugueze* came to trade to the *East-Indies*, in the sixteenth century, they tell us, “ That from ancient monuments, writings and constant tradition, which the Christians they found in these parts preserved, they learned † that *St. Thomas* came first to *Socotra*, an isle in the *Arabian* sea, and thence to *Crananor*, where having converted many, he travelled farther to the East, and preached the Gospel with good success, and returned to the kingdom of *Coromandel*, where at *Malipur* the Metropolis, near to the place where the river *Ganges* flows into the gulf of *Bengala*, he begun to erect a place for divine worship, till he was prohibited by the priests, and the *Sagamo* or Prince of the country. But upon convictions by several miracles, the work went on; the *Sagamo* himself embraced the Christian Faith, and his example was followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects. The *Brachmans* fearing this would spoil their trade, and extirpate the Religion of their country, pursued the Apostle to a tomb, whither he used to retire for his devotions: while he was at prayer, they load him with darts and stones, and one of them run him through with a lance. His disciples took up his body, and buried it in a Church he had lately built, which was afterward improved into a fabric of great magnificence.” From these early plantations of Christianity in the *East-Indies*, there is said to have been a continued succession of those called *Christians of St. Thomas* in these

* In *Synopsi de vita & morte Apostolorum*.

† *Massæi Hist. rerum Indicarum*, lib. 2. pag. 85—88. *Orosius de Rebus Emanuelis*, lib. 3. pag. 119. Apud *Dr. Cave's Lives of the Apostles*.

these parts unto this day. The *Portugueze* found them in great numbers at their first arrival in several places, no less than fifteen or sixteen thousand families. They are very poor, and their Churches generally very mean and fordid, wherein they had no image of the saints, nor any representation but that of the cross. They are all governed by the Patriarch of *Muzal*. They promiscuously receive all to the holy communion, which they give under both kinds of bread and wine; tho' instead of wine, which their country wants, they make use of the juice of raisins steeped in water, and pressed out. Children are not baptized, except in case of sickness, till the fortieth day. Every Lord's-day they have prayer and preaching, where their devotions are managed with reverence and solemnity. Their Bible, at least their New-Testament, is in the *Syriac* language; to the study whereof their preachers exhort their people. They observe *Advent* and *Lent*, and some solemn festivals. They have some kind of monasteries of Religious, who live in great abstinence and charity. Their priests are shaven in fashion of a cross, have leave to marry once, but are denied for a second time. No marriages are dissolved but by death. These rites and customs they solemnly pretend to have derived from the very time of *St. Thomas*, and with the greatest care observe them to this day. But of these Christians of *St. Thomas* in *Malabar*, we shall have further occasion to discourse in the seventh Chapter of this book, and therefore I now leave them, and go on to the other Apostles.

James the Less, called by the ancients *James the Just*, and by the Apostle *Paul*, *James the Lord's brother*, Gal. i. 19. being the Son of *Joseph*, afterwards husband to the blessed Virgin, as is probable by his first wife. Hence the blessed Virgin is called *Mary* the mother of *James* and *Joses*, Matth. xxvii. 56. and by *Mark*, Chap. xv. 40. the mother of *James the Less*, and of *Joses* and *Salome*; and the same person is called, *John* xix. 25. *the Mother of Jesus*. We have no mention in sacred Scripture of the place of his birth, or of his trade or way of life, before he was called to be a Disciple and Apostle, nor any particular account of him, during our Saviour's life. After
our

our Lord's Resurrection he was honoured with a manifestation of his master, 1 Cor. xv. 7. *After that he was seen of James.* He was principally active at the Synod of *Jerusalem*, in the great controversy about the *Mosaic Rites*. The case being opened by *Peter*, and further debated by *Paul* and *Barnabas*; at last the Apostle *James* stood up, *Acts* xv. 13——22. and gave sentence, that the disciples should not be troubled with the *Mosaic Rites*, or the bondage of the *Jewish Yoke*; only for a present accommodation a few indifferent things should be observed: and ushers in his opinion with a positive determination, *Ver.* 19. *Διὸ ἐγὼ κρίνω, Wherefore my sentence is.* *Peter*, tho' in that council, produced no such intimation of his authority; if he had, the Champions for the Church of *Rome* would have made a great noise with it to assert his *judicative power*. This Apostle wrote the canonical Epistle of *James*, which is placed before those writ by *Peter*; and *Peter* himself seems to have stood in awe of him, to that degree, as to run into an unwarrantable dissimulation, *Gal.* ii. 11, 12. He was a person of eminent parts, prudence and discretion, and therefore had a great share of the management of the affairs of the Church in general, and of the Church at *Jerusalem* in particular.

After the synod at *Jerusalem*, he administered his office of Apostleship with great fidelity, care and success, so as to awaken the malice of his enemies to conspire his ruin. They were vexed that *Paul* had escaped their hands, by appealing to *Cæsar*, and therefore turn their revenge against *James*. Not being able to effectuate their design under *Festus's* government, they got it accomplished under the Procuratorship of *Albinus* his successor. *Josephus* has the story thus *; “ *Ananus*, of the
 “ sect of the *Sadducees*, was then high-priest: These
 “ men are severe justiciars; and since it was so, he
 “ thought he had got a proper time, when *Festus* was
 “ dead, and *Albinus* on his journey, to call a council of
 “ the judges, where *James* the brother of *Jesus Christ*,
 “ and some others, are condemned as guilty of impiety,
 “ and

* *Antiquitat. lib.* 20. cap. 8.

“ and ordered to be stoned to death ; which displeased
 “ all good men in the city.” *Eusebius* out of *Egesippus*
 has the story more fully. The sum of his account is †,
 “ The Apostle *James* having with great freedom and
 “ assurance preached *Jesus* the Son of God to be the
 “ Saviour of the world, and he being a just and excel-
 “ lent person, who had drunk neither wine nor strong
 “ drink from his mother’s womb, neither had a razor
 “ come upon his head, but lived continually in praying
 “ and wrestling with God — Many believed his do-
 “ ctrine, even some of the princes and rulers ; and there-
 “ fore the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were afraid, lest the peo-
 “ ple should believe that *Jesus* was the *Messiah*, and
 “ did exhort *James* to go up to the pinnacle of the tem-
 “ ple, and inform the multitude who were gathered to
 “ the feast of the passover, that *Jesus* was not the *Mes-*
 “ *siab*. But he on the contrary said, *Why do ye enquire*
 “ *of me concerning Jesus the son of man ? He sits in hea-*
 “ *ven at the right hand of majesty on high, and will come*
 “ *in the clouds of heaven.* The people below hearing
 “ this, glorified God, and proclaimed, *Hosanna to the*
 “ *son of David !* The *Scribes* and *Pharisees* being vexed
 “ that they had lost their design, cried out, *Justus was*
 “ *become an impostor*, and threw him down from the
 “ place where he stood: Tho’ bruised with the fall,
 “ yet he got upon his knees, and prayed to heaven
 “ for them ; but they still enraged, began to load him
 “ with a shower of stones, till one more mercifully
 “ cruel than the rest, came behind, and with a Fuller’s
 “ club beat out his brains. Thus died this good man in
 “ the 96th year of his age, 24 years after Christ’s ascen-
 “ sion, says *Epiphanius* *.” In the inscription of his
 epistle he styles himself, *A servant of God and of the Lord*
Jesus Christ. The epistle is directed to the *Jewish* con-
 verts scattered abroad, that is, in the eastern countries:
 The design thereof is to comfort them under their suffer-
 ings, and to confirm them against error. He observed
 a degeneracy of manners creeping on, that the purity of
 the Christian Faith began to be undermined by the loose
 I doctrines

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 23.

* Hæres. 78.

doctrines and practices of the *Gnostics*, men who de-
 claimed against good works, as useless and unnecessary,
 asserting a naked belief of the Christian Doctrine suffi-
 cient to salvation. Against these the Apostle reasons strong-
 ly, pressing Purity, Patience, Charity, and all the vir-
 tues of a good life; and by undeniable arguments proves,
 that the Faith which carries along with it purity, obe-
 dience to the commands of God, and a holy life, can
 only justify us before God, and intitle us to eternal life.

The Apostle *Simon* is called the *Canaanite*, from the
Hebrew word *Cana*, to be *zealous*: hence he is called
Simon Zelotes, or the *Zealot**, as *Nicephorus* conceives,
 from his zealous desire to advance religion in the world.
 The several natural dispositions of the Apostles, did tend
 to qualify them for so difficult a work, as building up
 the New Testament Church, against all the opposition
 of the world; and also to be mutual checks, incitements
 and assistants to one another, as is more fully illustrated
 by the learned Mr. *Fleming*†. *Simon* being invested with
 the apostolical office, little further mention is made of
 him in the history of the Gospel. He continued with
 the rest of the Apostles, till their dispersion up and down
 the world, and then applied himself to the execution of
 his charge. *Nicephorus* says ||, *He having received the*
holy Spirit, travelled through Egypt, Cyrene, Afric,
Mauritania and Libya; nor could the coldness of the cli-
mate hinder him from shipping himself, and the Christian
Doctrine, to the western ocean, even to Britain itself, where
he preached and wrought many miracles. And after en-
during many troubles and afflictions, he with great cheer-
fulness suffered death on the cross, and so passed to the en-
joyment of his master. Dorotheus says ‡, *He was crucified*
and buried in Britain.

Jude the Apostle, in the history of the Gospel is called
 both by the name of *Thaddæus* and *Lebbæus*, *Matth. x. 3.*
Mark iii. 18. and that none might confound the righteous
 with the wicked, he is called *Jude the brother of James*,
 Jude

* Luke vi. 15. Acts i. 13.

† Loganthropos, Book 3. Chap. 2. pag. 218, &c.

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 40. ‡ In Synopsi.

Jude ver. 1. and *Judas, not Iscariot*, John xiv. 22. As to his descent and parentage, he was of our Lord's kindred; *Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses, and Simon and Judas?* *Matth.* xiii. 55. *Nicephorus* makes him the son of *Jose b*, and brother to *James* called bishop of *Jerusalem* *. After our Lord's ascending to heaven, *Eusebius* says †, *Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles, dispatched Thaddæus, one of the seventy disciples, to Abgarus governour of Edessa, where he healed diseases, wrought miracles, expounded the doctrines of Christianity, and converted Abgarus and his people to the faith. For all this, the governour ordered gold and silver to be given to him, which he refused, saying, They had little reason to receive that from others, which themselves had freely relinquished. A large account of the whole story is extant in Eusebius, translated, as he says, out of Syriac, from the records of the city of Edessa. Jerom makes this Thaddæus to be the same with the Apostle Jude* ‡. This cannot be easily reconciled with *Eusebius*, who says, *He was one of the seventy disciples; which he would not have said, had he been of the twelve. Nicephorus reports, That Judas, not Iscariot, but the brother of James, at his first setting out to preach the Gospel, went up and down Judæa, Galilee, Samaria and Idumæa, and also through the cities of Syria and Mesopotamia, and at last came to Edessa, the city of Abgarus, where Thaddæus, one of the seventy, had been before him, and there perfected what the other had begun. And having by his sermons and miracles established Christ's kingdom, he died a peaceable and quiet death* †. Tho' *Dorotheus* makes him to have been killed at *Berytus* **, and honourably buried there; By the consent of many writers of the Latin church, says *Dr. Cave* ††, he is said to have travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolic ministry, for many years together, he was at last, for his free and open reproving the superstitious rites of the Magi, cruelly put to death. He has

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 40. † Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 13.

‡ In Mattheum, cap. x. ver. 3.

† Nicephori Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 40.

** In Synopsi de Apostolis. †† Lives of the Apostles, pag. 155.

has left one epistle of universal concern, inscribed to all Christians.

In all the lists of the Apostles which we have in the Gospel, *Judas Iscariot* is last named. Tho' he had no considerable hand in propagating Christianity, for he came to a wretched end soon after he betrayed his master; yet since I have discoursed of the rest, I shall offer a few things concerning him. As to his Surname *Iscariot*, he seems to have had it because he kept the purse. For 'tis rationally conjectured by Dr. *Hammond* and others, that this was a name derived from the *Syriac* language, where the word signifies a *purse*, and so it denoted the *purse-bearer*. If it be enquired why our Lord made choice of such a man? I answer, with the learned Mr. *Fleming**, for the reasons following: *First*, Because the Scripture must be fulfilled, that our Lord was to be betrayed by one of his own disciples, or supposed friends, *Acts* i. 16. *Psal.* xli. 9. *2dly*, Because our Lord would this way lay an obligation upon Christians to make a necessary distinction between a man's qualifications as a minister, and his commission to it as an office; and that we may believe that a minister's mission may be valid, tho' he himself be un sanctified. *Judas* was chosen an Apostle as well as the rest. *3dly*, Because Christ would let us know that no Church-society on earth can be supposed ever to be so pure, but that some *Judas* may creep in. *4thly*, Because our Lord would have us understand by his practice by what rule we ought to proceed, both in admitting men into a Christian Society, and into a distinct order of offices, and also in casting them out from thence. Our Lord knew from the first, that *Judas* was an ill man, *Job.* vi. 70, 71. but he seemed to have the ordinary qualifications of piety and parts. He did counterfeit the good man. He did shew that he was a man of parts, being entrusted with the purse, which he managed with address and cunning; his conduct in his treachery, giving the sign to the servants of the high-priest, by kissing his master, shews equal cunning and confidence. A visible defect in these qualifications, that can be made
evi-

* *Loganthropos*, Vol. 2. pag. 170. & seqq.

evident, as it was in *Judas*, is just ground to turn a man out of a sacred office. But I leave the Traitor, and proceed to

Matthias. He was not an Apostle of the first election, chosen immediately by our Saviour, but one who by divine designation succeeded *Judas* the Traitor, in the office he had forfeited. We are not then to expect any thing remarkable of him in the history of the Gospel. He was one of our Lord's Disciples, probably of the Seventy who had attended him, during the whole time of his public ministry. *Judas Iscariot* having betrayed his Lord, came to a fatal end, for *he went and hanged himself*, Matth. xxvii. 5. *and falling down burst asunder, and his bowels gushed out*, Acts i. 18. A vacancy being thus made in the college of Apostles, as soon as they returned from mount *Olivet*, where our Lord took his leave of them, when he ascended up into heaven, they went into an upper room, which, *Nicephorus* says †, was in the house of *John* the Evangelist, on Mount *Zion*, and there elected a fit person to supply the vacancy. *Peter* opened the affair with an excellent speech, and two were propounded in order to the choice; *Joseph*, called *Barsabas*, who was surnamed *Justus*, whom some make one of the brothers of our Lord; and *Matthias*. Prayer being made, that divine providence might direct the choice, the lot fell upon *Matthias*, and he was numbered with the Eleven Apostles. The Holy Ghost being given to him, he betook himself to his charge. The first fruits of his Apostolate he spent in *Judæa*, where he reaped a considerable harvest. We have little certainty after this concerning him, only *Dorotheus* says ‡, *He preached the Gospel to barbarous men in the Inner-Æthiopia, where is the port of Hyflus, and the river Phasis*; (which character, as *Dr. Cave* remarks *, are applicable to *Cappadocia*) and died at *Sebastopolis*, and is buried near the temple of the sun. *Nicephorus* tells us ‡, *That with great courage and intrepidity he suffered martyrdom.*

Having

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 1.

‡ In Synopsi, de vita & morte Apostolorum.

* Lives of the Apostles, pag. 159.

‡ Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 40.

Having viewed the first planting of Christianity by the Apostles, from the unquestionable records of the sacred Scripture, and so far as the imperfect remaining accounts of the ancients give us any light; it must be also acknowledged that the Evangelists, and other apostolic men, did contribute very much to this good work. But I shall only take notice of a few of them.

It is reported by *Eusebius**, “ That *Mark* the Evangelist was sent into *Egypt* by the Apostle *Peter* to plant Christianity in those parts; where so great was the success of his ministry, that he converted multitudes both of men and women, not only to embrace the Christian Religion, but to a more than ordinary strict profession of it.” Some conceive that the book of *Philo* the Jew, *περὶ βίου θεωρητικου*, that is, of a contemplative life, which is yet extant, speaks of their peculiar rites and way of life. But that book does not treat of Christians, but of Jews, and professors of the *Mosaic* Religion, and especially of that sect called *Essenes*. *Mark* did not confine his preaching to *Alexandria*, and the *Oriental* parts of *Egypt*; but, if we may believe *Nicephorus* †, “ he removed also westward, going through the countries of *Marmorica*, *Pentapolis*, and others in these parts of the world, where the people were barbarous in their manners, and idolatrous in their worship: yet by his preaching and miracles God opened a way for their entertaining the glorious Gospel, and he left them not, till he had not only gained them, but confirmed them in the profession of it. Returning to *Alexandria*, he preached there, set the affairs of the Church in order, and constituted governors and pastors. But about the time of *Easter*, when the Heathens kept the solemnities of their Idol *Serapis*, they broke in upon St. *Mark*, and by their hands he suffered martyrdom, and had his bones burnt to ashes”.

Luke, the beloved physician, was born at *Antioch*, the metropolis of *Syria*, educated in the *Greek* and *Egyptian* learning, converted probably by *Paul*, during his abode

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 16.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. chap. 43.

abode at *Antioch*. After his coming into *Macedonia*, he was his constant companion, and is frequently mentioned in the Epistles, as with that Apostle, 2 *Tim.* iv. 11. *Col.* iv. 14. and some think, this is the brother, *whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the Churches of Christ*, 2 *Cor.* viii. 18. His way and manner of writing is accurate and exact, his style polite and elegant, sublime and lofty, yet perspicuous, and expresses himself in very pure Greek. He relates divers things more copiously than the other Evangelists. 'Tis not necessary to determine the precise time when his Gospel was written. Some think it was written in *Achaia*, during his travels there with *Paul*. *Jerom**, and some of the ancients tell us, "That during the time *Paul* was prisoner at *Rome*, preaching in his own hired house, and *Luke* there attending him, he wrote the Gospel, and the history of the Acts of the Apostles, which is a continuation of the affairs of the New-Testament Church, to the reign of *Nero*." Many excellent books have been formed in a prison or confinement. If this was so, 'twas about the 27th year after Christ's ascension, and the fourth year of *Nero's* reign. In his Gospel he declares *what had been delivered to him by those, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word*, *Luke* i. 2. And in the history of the *Acts*, he writes what he himself had seen. We need have no recourse to the authority of *Peter* to support the Gospel of *Mark*, or to say with *Jerom* †, *That it was writ according to what Peter told him*; nor to the authority of *Paul* to support the writings of *Luke*. For both these Evangelists, tho' they were not Apostles, yet they were Disciples, who companied with the Apostles all along, *Acts* i. 21. and received the Holy Spirit, and were divinely inspired in writing the canon of the Scripture. Concerning *Luke*, *Jerom* adds ‡, *That he lived 84 years, and never had a wife, and is buried at Constantinople, to which city his relicks, and those of Andrew the Apostle,*

* Catal. Script. Eccles. in Luca. † Ibid. in Marco. *Marcus discipulus & interpres Petri, juxta quod Petrum referentem audierat.*

‡ Catal. Scrip. Eccles. in Luca.

Apostle, were carried out of Achaia, in the 20th year of the Emperor Constantine.

Philip was one of the Deacons ordained in the 6th Chap. of the Acts. He went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ to them, and the people with one accord gave heed to the things which he spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did; for unclean spirits crying with a loud voice, came out of those that were possessed with them, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed; and there was great joy in that city: Acts viii. 5—8. Simon the Magician, astonished at these mighty things, professed himself a proselyte, and was baptized. “ After this, Philip is commanded to go toward the South, “ the way that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza; here he “ converts a man of Æthiopia, an Eunuch of great authority under Candace, Queen of the Æthiopians, who “ had the charge of her treasure, and had come to “ Jerusalem to worship.” This Eunuch being returned to his country, preached and propagated the doctrine of the Christian Faith, and spread abroad the glad tidings of our Saviour. On which account Jerom says, He was sent as an Apostle to the nation of the Æthiopians: and Cyril † makes that prediction of the Psalmist, to be fulfilled in him, Æthiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God. I shall have occasion in another part of this essay to speak more concerning the Church of Æthiopia. The traditions of that country, which I reckon very uncertain, so far as they relate to these ancient times, tell us ‡, That the Eunuch being returned home, converted his mistress Candace to the Christian Faith, and afterwards, by her leave, propagated it through Æthiopia, till meeting with Matthew the Apostle, by their joint endeavours they expelled idolatry out of those parts; which being done, he crossed the Red-sea, and preached the Christian Religion in Arabia, Persia, India, and in many of those eastern countries, till at length in the island Taprobane, which some call*

* Com. in Isai. 53. Operum Tom. 5. fol. m. 91 — Et Apostolus genti Æthiopum missus est.

† Cyrilli Catechesis 17. pag. 457.

‡ Godign. de Rebus Abassinis, lib. i. cap. 18. pag. 117.

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call now Ceylon, and others Sumatra, he sealed his doctrine with his blood.

Leaving the Apostolic Age, I proceed to take a view of the Christian Church from thence to the time of *Constantine* the Great, for the space of at least 200 years, and shall principally remark what progress Christianity made in the world, to the overthrow of heathenish idolatry, and what contributed to the same; not forgetting the persecutions the Christians endured by the heathens, and some other things necessary to be opened in this period, so far as they concern the subject which I have undertaken.

The wonderful spreading of the Gospel, in the time of the Apostles, over most parts of the then known world, which we have already accounted for, is indeed astonishing: and what follows is no less; especially if we consider that Christianity, from the spirituality of its precepts, the sublimeness of its principles, its tendency to suppress lusts and corruptions, and its contrariety to the idolatry and superstition which had obtained a footing in the world for some thousands of years, was like to meet with bad entertainment, and the fiercest opposition. Indeed in fact it did meet with all the discouraging opposition that Satan or his instruments could muster up against it; all the secret undermining, and open assaults which malice and prejudice, wit and parts, learning and power, were able to make upon it. Notwithstanding all which, it prospered; which demonstrates, that the power of Almighty God did accompany our holy religion. That the despised doctrine of the cross of Christ should prevail universally against the allurements of flesh and blood, against the blandishments of the world, the rage and persecution of the kings of the earth, against the witchcrafts of heretics, the learning and eloquence of orators and philosophers, and the power of the *Roman* empire; that it should conquer without arms, persuade without rhetoric, overcome enemies, disarm tyrants, and subdue empires; this proves its original to be divine, and its Protector God Almighty.

No sooner did Christianity set up its standard, but persons from all parts, of all kind of principles and denominations, began to flock to it, as *Origen* tells *Celsus* * ; *That many, both Greeks and Barbarians, wise and unwise, contend for the truth of our Religion, even to the laying down their lives, a thing not known to any other profession in the world.* And he challenges him † to shew such an unspeakable number of *Greeks and Barbarians* reposing such a confidence in *Æsculapius*, as he could shew of those who had embraced the Faith of the Holy Jesus. When *Celsus* objects, *That Christianity was a clandestine Religion, that crept up and down in corners*; *Origen* answers ‖, *That the Religion of the Christians was better known through the world than the dictates of their best philosophers.* Nor were they mean and ignorant persons only, that came over to Christianity, but as *Arnobius* observes ‡, “ Is not this an
 “ argument for our faith, that in so little a space of time,
 “ the Sacraments of Christ’s great name are diffused over
 “ the world? That there is no nation so barbarous
 “ and cruel, that has not laid aside its rudeness, and
 “ turned meek and tractable; that orators, grammarians,
 “ rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers,
 “ men of great genius, love our religion, despising
 “ those things wherein before they trusted? That servants
 “ will rather suffer torments by their masters, wives sooner
 “ part with their husbands, and children chuse to be disinherited
 “ by their parents, rather than abandon the Christian Faith?” *Tertullian* addressing himself to the *Roman* governours, in behalf of the Christians, assures them **, *That tho’ Christians be as strangers of no long standing, yet they had filled all places of their dominions, their cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, armies, tribes, the palace, senate, and courts of judicature, only they had left to the heathens their temples. They are fit and ready for war, tho’ they yield themselves to be killed for their religion. Had they a mind to revenge themselves, their numbers were great enough to appear in open arms, having a party*

not

* *Contra Celsum*, lib. 1. pag. 21, 22. † *Ibid.* lib. 3. pag. 124.

‖ *Ibid.* lib. 1. pag. 7. ‡ *Adversus Gentes*, lib. 1. pag. m. 53.

** *Apolog. contra Gentes*, cap. 37. pag. m. 46. cum notis *Pamelii*, Edit. Col. 1617.

not in this or that province, but in all quarters of the world. Nay, should they all but agree to retire out of the Roman empire, what a loss would there be of so many subjects? The world would be amazed at the solitude, and desolation which would ensue upon it; all things would be stupid and silent, as if the city were dead in which you reign; you would have more enemies than friends; whereas now your enemies are fewer, because of the multitude of Christians; almost all your subjects and best citizens consisting of Christians. Will you chuse rather enemies to mankind, than enemies to human errors? Who would defend you, if we were gone, from those fiends that ruin your souls and your health, which we now drive away without price or reward? It would be more than a sufficient revenge to us, that your city, if we were gone, would be an empty possession to unclean spirits: and therefore Christianity is not to be called a trouble to your cities, but a favour; nor are we to be accounted enemies to mankind, but only adversaries to human errors. The same learned author, writing to Scapula, deputy of Afric, then persecuting the Christians, desires him to consider*, That if he went on with his persecution, what he would do with those many thousands both of men and women, of every rank and age, that would readily offer themselves? What fires or swords must he have to dispatch them? Carthage itself must be decimated, his own friends and acquaintance, the principal men and matrons in the city will suffer. If you spare not us, spare your self, spare Carthage; have pity on the province.

Pliny the younger, tho' a heathen, confesses to the Emperor †, “ That the cause of the Christians was a
“ matter worthy of deliberation, by reason of the
“ multitudes who were concerned; for many of each
“ sex, of every age and quality, were and must be called
“ in question: This superstition, says he, having infected
“ and over-run not the city only, but towns and coun-
“ tries, the temples and sacrifices being generally deso-
“ late and forsaken.” Justin Martyr tells Tryphon the

X 3

Jew,

* Tertul. ad Scapulam, cap. 15. pag. m. 92.

† Plin. Epist. lib. 10. ep. 97. ad Trajanum.

Jew *, “ That however they might boast of the universality of their religion, there were many nations and places of the world, whither they nor it ever came ; whereas there was no part of mankind, whether *Greeks* or *Barbarians*, or by what name soever they be called, even the most rude and unpolished nations, where prayers and thanksgivings were not made to the great Creator of the world, through the name of the crucified Jesus.” *Lactantius* says †, “ That the Christian Law is entertained from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, where every sex, age, nation and country does with one heart and soul worship God.” If from generals we descend to particulars, *Irenæus*, who entred Bishop of *Lyons* in the year of our Lord 179, informs us ‡, “ This Preaching of the Gospel, and this Faith the Church scattered up and down the whole world maintains, as inhabiting one house, and believes it with one heart and soul, teaches and preaches it as with one mouth ; for tho’ there be different languages in the world, yet the force of tradition, or of that doctrine that has been delivered to the Church, is but one and the same. The Churches which are founded in *Germany* do not believe otherwise than those in *Spain*, *France*, *Egypt* and *Libya*, as well as those in the middle of the world.” *Tertullian*, who wrote probably not above twenty years after *Irenæus*, gives a larger account ||, “ *Their sound*, says he, *went through all the earth*, speaking of the Apostles : In whom but in Christ, who is now come, have all these nations believed ? Even *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Elamites*, the inhabitants of *Mesopotamia*, *Armenia*, *Phrygia*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Asia* and *Pamphilia*, those who dwell in *Egypt* and the region of *Afric*, which is beyond *Cyrene*, strangers and denizens at *Rome*, *Jews* at *Jerusalem*, and the rest of the nations ; as also many of the *Getuli*, many borders of the *Moors*, the
“ utmost

* *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, operum pag. 345. Edit. Colon. 1686.

† *De Justitia*, lib. 5. cap. 13. pag. m. 433.

‡ *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. 3. cap. 3. pag. m. 39.

|| *Adversus Judæos*. cap. 7. pag. m. 98.

“utmost bounds of *Spain*, divers nations in *Gaul*, and
 “those places of *Britain*, inaccessible to the *Roman*
 “armies, have yielded subjection to Christ; (under
 “which expression, by the by, seems to be meant *Scotland*)
 “and also the *Sarmatians*, the *Dacians*, the *Germans*
 “and *Scythians*, with many obscure countries and pro-
 “vinces, many islands and places unknown to us, which,
 “says he, I cannot reckon up. In all which the name of
 “Christ reigns, because he is now come; before whom
 “the gates of all cities are set open, and none shut; be-
 “fore whom doors of brass fly open, and bars of iron
 “are snapt asunder; that is, those hearts once possessed
 “by the devil, by faith in Christ are set open.” And
 afterward he demonstrates, that the kingdom of Christ
 is more extensive than any of the four great monarchies.
 To which add another passage of *Arnobius*. He, when
 speaking of the success of the Gospel, says*, “We
 “may enumerate and make a profitable computation of
 “those things done in *India*, among the *Persians*, the
 “*Seres* and the *Medes*; and also in *Arabia*, *Egypt*, *Asia*,
 “*Syria*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, among the *Parthians*, *Phry-*
 “*gians*, in *Achaia*, *Macedonia*, and *Epirus*; and in all isles
 “and provinces that the rising or setting sun shines upon;
 “even at *Rome* itself, the empress of all, where men
 “educated in King *Numa*’s arts and ancient superstition,
 “have forsaken the same, and heartily embraced the
 “truth of the Christian Religion.”

As shadows of the night do vanish at the rising of the
 sun, so did the darkness of heathenish idolatry and super-
 stition fly before the light of the Gospel: the more it
 prevailed, the more clearly it discovered the folly and im-
 piety of their worship. Their solemn rites appeared tri-
 fling and ridiculous; their sacrifices barbarous and inhu-
 man; their *Dæmons* were expelled by the meanest Chri-
 stian; their oracles became dumb and silent; their very
 priests began to be ashamed of their magic charms, and
 the more subtle heads among them who stood up for the
 rites and solemnities of their religion, were forced to run

X 4

them

* *Adversus Gentes*, lib. 2. pag. 61. Edit. Froben. 1546.

them into mystical and allegorical meanings, far either from the intention or apprehension of the vulgar.

If we look into the sacred Scriptures, we may be well assured of our Redeemer's victory over the enemy of mankind. Immediately after *Adam's* fall it was prophesied, that the *Messiah*, the promised seed, *should bruise the head of the serpent*, Gen. iii. 15. For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, 1 Joh. iii. 8. When *satan* attacked our Lord by his temptations, he triumphed over him, *Matth. iv. 1—12*. In the time of his public ministry here upon earth he frequently ejected *Dæmons* out of the possessed: they trembled for fear of his power, and cried out, *What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?* Luke iv. 34. *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Matth. viii. 29. *Torment me not*, Mark v. 7. *I beseech thee torment me not*, Luke viii. 28. When he accompanied the Gospel with power, *satan's* kingdom did fall like lightning from heaven, Luke x. 18. At his death he destroyed the devil, Heb. ii. 14. He spoiled *principalities and powers*, and triumphed over them on the cross, Col. ii. 14, 15. At his glorious ascending up on high, he led captivity captive: he broke *satan's* chains, and delivered poor captives from them. He'll sit at God's right hand till he make his enemies his footstool, Psal. cx. 1. The Gospel, the rod of his strength, is mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of this adversary, 2 Cor. x. 4: By his spirit he convinces the world of sin, — and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged; John xvi. 7—11. And tho' *satan*, as far as he can, exerts his limited power, yet is he reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

If we look into other authors, we shall find this victory of Christ over the devil remarkably confirmed. Almost in every Chapter of the history I now write, we have pregnant evidences thereof; particularly in the first ages of the Christian Church, when the devil, perceiving his kingdom shaking, fought by all means to support it, then the ruin thereof quickly advanced. The heathen oracles were struck dumb; the famous oracle at *Delphos*, which

which both *Greeks* and *Romans* consulted at or before our Saviour's incarnation, had lost its reputation, and began to cease to give any answers, as the response mentioned by *Suidas**, as at the foot of the page, and from him copied by *Hottinger*†, and others, does plainly import. Of the vanity and imposture of the oracles of the heathen, the curious may see what *Eusebius* has with great learning advanced in his fourth and fifth books of *Evangelical Preparation*. But I shall prove that these oracles were silenced about the time of our Redeemer's incarnation, by the testimonies of heathen authors who lived and wrote near that time. *Lucan* speaks of the *Delphic* oracles as a great favour, but that they are now silent, since kings did fear things to come, and forbade the Gods to speak‡. *Juvenal* says, *The Delphic oracles have ceased, and left mankind under darkness as to things to come*||. *Lucian* owns, *That while he dwelt at Delphi, the oracles gave no answers, the Tripos spake not, nor was the priest inspired***.

Plutarch, who lived in the time of the Emperor *Trajan*, wrote a particular tract, which is yet extant, concerning the ceasing of oracles, which he endeavours to resolve by natural, moral and political causes. But all his philosophy was not able to give a just and satisfying account of it, since he neglected the main spring of the whole; that is, *Christ's victory over the devil*. There is one cause that

* *Suidas* in *Augusto*. † *Hist. Eccl. Tom. i. pag. 35.*

Παῖς Ἑβραῖος κέλεται με θεοῖς μακάρεσσιν ἀνάσσειν.
 Τόνδε δόμον περιπαῖν, ἢ αἶδην αὐθις ἰκέσθαι.
 Λοιπὸν ἀπιθί σιγῶν ἐκ βωμῶν ἡμετέρων.
 That is,

A Hebrew Boy who reigns in Heavens high,
 To leave these Altars hath commanded me,
 And pack to Hell, to Silence and to Woe:
 Then therefore silent from our Altars go.

‡ *Lucani Pharsalia, lib. 5. ver. 111.*

Non ullo secula dono
 Nostra carent majore Deum, quam Delphica sedes
 Quod siluit, postquam Reges timuere futura,
 Et superos vetuere loqui.

|| *Satyr. 6. ver. 544.*

Quoniam Delphis oracula cessant,
 Et genus humanum damnat caligo futuri.

** *Luciani Phalaris 2. operum. Tom. i. pag. m. 745.*

that *Plutarch* assigns, which deserves our notice, viz. the death and departure of those *Dæmons* which presided over the oracles. To this purpose he relates a memorable passage *, “ concerning a voice that cried three times
 “ aloud to one *Thamus*, an *Egyptian* ship-master and his
 “ company, as he sailed by the *Echinadæ* islands to *Italy*,
 “ commanding him, when he came near the *Palodes*,
 “ to make proclamation, that the great *Pan* was dead ;
 “ and he had no sooner done so, but there was heard a
 “ mighty noise, not of one, but of many together, who
 “ seemed to groan and lament, and make a great wonder.
 “ *Tiberius* the Emperor sent for *Thamus*, who satisfied
 “ him of the story, and he enquired diligently who this
 “ *Pan* was.” The circumstances of the time when this happened, as *Eusebius* observes †, corresponds with the time of our Lord’s conversing in the world, and dispossessing *Dæmons* ; or, as others remark, with the time of our Saviour’s passion, when he *spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly on the cross*. That the silence of oracles and the weakning of the power of *Dæmons* was the effect of the victory of Christ, and of the Propagation of Christianity, we need no more than the plain confession of *Porphyry*, an avowed enemy to our religion, who says ‡, ‘*Tis no wonder if the city for so many years has been over-run with sickness, Æsculapius and the rest of the Gods having withdrawn their converse with men ; for since Jesus began to be worshipped, no man has received any public help or benefit by the Gods.*’ A great argument, as *Eusebius* well urges, of our Saviour’s divinity, and the truth of his doctrine. In the progress of this history we shall have further evidence that Christianity ruined the empire which the devil had obtained over the heathen world.

Having now seen with what mighty success Christianity displayed its banners among men in several corners of the earth, let us next consider what contributed to this happy event. No doubt the principal cause was, that God in his goodness did then see it the proper time to perform
 the

* *Plutarch’s Morals*, pag. m. 1331.

† *De Præp. Evang.* lib. 5. cap. 16, 17. pag. m. 208.

‡ *Ibid.* lib. 5. cap. 1. pag. 179.

the promises concerning the Mediator's kingdom, " That
 " he shall have dominion from sea to sea, from the river
 " to the ends of the earth ; they that dwell in the wil-
 " derness shall bow before him, and his enemies shall lick
 " the dust ; the kings of *Tarshish* and the isles shall bring
 " presents ; the kings of *Sheba* and *Seba* shall offer gifts ;
 " yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations
 " shall serve him: *Psal.* 72. Is it a light thing that thou
 " should be my servant, to raise up the tribes of *Jacob*,
 " and to restore the preserved of *Israel* ? I will also
 " give thee for a light to the *Gentiles*, that thou mayest
 " be my salvation to the ends of the earth, *Isa.* xlix. 6.
 " ———The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom,
 " which shall never be destroyed——It shall break in
 " pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall
 " stand for ever, *Dan.* ii. 44. Then was the time when
 " our Redeemer shall see of the travel of his soul, and
 " shall be satisfied, *Isa.* liii. 11. When all the ends of the
 " world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all
 " the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him ;
 " *Psal.* xxii. 27." With many other promises of the
 like nature. *Then was the Holy Ghost given, for Jesus was*
then glorified, Joh. vii. 39. *Then did he go forth conquering*
and to conquer, Rev. vi. 2.

The Christian Religion did carry such essential charac-
 ters of being given of God, as the only way to save lost
 sinners from the misery their sins had deserved, (as we
 have more fully seen in the first Chapter) as thereby to
 recommend itself to every good and wise man. The
 miracles of our Lord's birth, life and death, with what
 were performed by the Apostles, by the powers and gifts
 of the Holy Ghost, given to them after his Ascension,
 were so great and so undeniable, so fresh then in the
 minds and memories of every person, as to convince any
 infidel, and may to this day fix an abiding impression of
 the Divinity of our Saviour, and that there is no salvation
 in any other. I mind here a passage that may be seen
 in *Mr. Fleming's Christology* *. He says, " A worthy
 " Gentleman that travelled through *Canaan*, told me,
 I " that

* Vol. 2. pag. 97, 98. *Marginal Note.*

“ that an ingenious person, his fellow-traveller, who
 “ was a Deist, used to make merry with all the stories
 “ that the *Romish* priests entertained them with, as to
 “ the sacred places and reliques they went to see ; and
 “ particularly when they first shewed him the clefts of the
 “ rock of mount *Calvary*, which is now included within
 “ the great dome that was built over it by *Constantine*
 “ the Great. But when he came to examine the clefts
 “ more narrowly and critically, he told his fellow-tra-
 “ vellers, that now he began to be a Christian ; for, *said*
 “ *he*, I have been long a student of nature and the ma-
 “ thematics, and I am sure these clefts and rents in this
 “ rock were never made by a natural or an ordinary
 “ earthquake ; for, by such a concussion, the rock must
 “ have split according to the veins, and where it was
 “ weakest in the adhesion of parts ; for thus, *said he*, I
 “ have observed it to have been done in other rocks,
 “ when separated or broken after an earthquake : and
 “ Reason tells me it must always be so. But it is quite
 “ otherwise here, for the rock is split athwart, and cross
 “ the veins, in a most strange and preternatural or su-
 “ pernatural manner. This therefore I can easily and
 “ plainly see to be the effect of a real miracle, which
 “ neither nature nor art could have ever effected. And
 “ therefore, *said he*, I thank God that I came hither,
 “ to see this standing monument of a miraculous power,
 “ by which God gives evidence to this day of the Divi-
 “ nity of Christ.”

There were also many things in the primitive Church,
 for the first two or three centuries, that did very much
 recommend Christianity to the world, and in divine pro-
 vidence did tend to the happy progress thereof. I shall
 mention these following.

First, The miraculous powers then bestow'd upon the
 Church, as appears from the first Christian Writers, who
 are yet extant. Thus *Justin Martyr* tells the emperor
 and the senate *, “ That our Lord Jesus has both the
 “ name of a Man and of a Saviour : he became man, and
 “ by the will of God the Father was born of the Virgin
 “ *Mary*,

* Apolog. i. pag. 45. Edit. Colon. 1686.

“ *Mary*, for the salvation of believers, and the over-
 “ throw of *Dæmons*, which they might know from
 “ things done in their own view ; for very many who
 “ had been vexed and possessed with *Dæmons* throughout
 “ the world, and in this very city, whom all their exor-
 “ cists and conjurers were not able to relieve, have been
 “ cured by us Christians, through the name of Jesus,
 “ who was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, and at this
 “ very time do still cure them, disarming and driving
 “ out the *Dæmons* from those they have possessed.” *Ire-*
næus, Bishop of *Lyons*, assures us *, “ That in his time,
 “ that is, in the second century, the Christians who
 “ were truly the disciples of Jesus, enabled by the grace
 “ of Christ, did benefits to men, according as they had
 “ received gifts from him to that end. Some ejected *Dæ-*
 “ *mons* and unclean spirits : the persons so dispossessed
 “ came over to the Church. Others had visions, and
 “ the gifts of prophecy. Others, by imposition of
 “ hands, healed the sick who laboured under any infir-
 “ mity, and restored them to health : some raised the
 “ dead, who continued many years with us. But, *says*
 “ *he*, I am not able to reckon up all the gifts, which the
 “ Church through the world, receiving from God, does
 “ every day freely exercise in the name of Jesus Christ,
 “ crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, to the benefit of na-
 “ tions, neither deceiving nor taking money from them ;
 “ but as they freely received from God, so they freely
 “ give. Neither do they these things, by calling on
 “ angels, nor by charms, nor curious arts, but with
 “ purity and plainness, directing prayers to God,
 “ through the name and virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 “ who does all things for the good, and not for the pre-
 “ judice of men.” *Tertullian* challenges the *Roman* Go-
 vernors †, “ Let any possessed person be brought be-
 “ fore their tribunals, and they shall see that the spirit
 “ being challenged or commanded to speak by any Chri-
 “ stian, shall as truly confess itself to be a devil, as be-
 “ fore he falsely boasted himself to be a God.” And he
 I tells,

* *Adversus Hæreses*, lib. 2. cap. 58. pag. m. 196, 197.

† *Apolog.* cap. 23. pag. 39.

tells *Scapula* the prefect*, “ That they rejected, disgraced and expelled *Dæmons* every day, as many could bear witness.” *Origen* bids *Celsus* “ take notice, whatever he might think of reports the Gospel makes concerning our Saviour, yet it was the great and magnificent work of Jesus, by his name, to heal even to this day whom he pleased †; and that he himself had ‡ seen many, who by having the name of God and of Christ called upon them, had been delivered from the greatest evils, as frenzy and madness, and many other distempers, which neither men nor *Dæmons* had been able to cure.” And in another place of the same book, *Origen* says ||, “ *Celsus* invents calumnies against the miracles of the blessed Jesus, saying they are done by *Egyptian* arts: but I will not take my argument only from them, but also from those done by the Apostles of our Lord, who without these miraculous powers, would never have been able to move their auditors, nor persuade them to desert the superstitions of their country, and embrace the doctrine which they preached, and defend it even to the death. To this day, *says he*, the footsteps of the Holy Spirit, who appeared in the shape of a dove, is preserved among Christians. They exorcize *Dæmons*, perform cures according to the will of God, foresee and foretell things to come; at which, tho’ *Celsus* and his personated Jew may laugh, yet I affirm further, that many, even against their inclinations, have been brought over to the Christian Religion, their former opposition having been suddenly changed into a resolute maintaining of Christianity unto death, after they had visions communicated to them. Several of this kind we ourselves have seen.——God bears witness, *says he*, with my conscience, that I do not endeavour by falsely contrived stories, but by various powerful instances, to recommend the religion of the Holy Jesus.” Now from all these testimonies it plainly appears that the miraculous powers bestowed on the Church, as a remainder of the Apostolic Spirit, did

“ continue

* Ad *Scapulam*, cap. 2. † *Origenes contra Celsum*, lib. 2. pag. 80.

‡ *Ibidem*, lib. 3. pag. 124. || *Origenes contra Celsum*, lib. 1. pag. 34.

continue till toward the end of the third century, which did very much tend to the overthrow of heathenish idolatry, and to promote the success of the Gospel, notwithstanding all opposition.

A *second* Advantage that contributed towards the triumph of Christianity, was the singular learning of many who became champions to defend it. It could not but be satisfying to men of mean capacities and employs, that those of more refined understandings, who could not be easily imposed upon, did trample on their former opinions, and not only entertained the Christian Faith, but defended it against most virulent opposers. The Gospel, at its first appearing in the World, was publish'd by men of ordinary education, that it might not seem to be an human artifice. But when after 100 years considerable progress, malice did enflame its adversaries, it was proper to take in external helps to its assistance. The Christian Apologists, and first writers against the Gentiles, did by rational discourses assail the Christians of those things charged unjustly against them; justified the excellency, reasonableness and divinity of our holy Religion, and exposed the folly and wickedness of heathenism: by which means, prejudices were removed, and thousands brought over to the Faith. Thus *Quadratus* Bishop of *Athens*, and *Aristides*, formerly a Philosopher in that city, dedicated each an Apologetic to the Emperor *Hadrian*. *Justin* the martyr, besides his tract against the Gentiles, wrote two apologies; the first to *Antoninus Pius*, the second to *Marcus Aurelius* and the Senate. About the same time *Athenagoras* presented his Apology to the Emperors *Marcus Aurelius* and *Aurelius Commodus*, and wrote his excellent discourse concerning the Resurrection. To the same *Aurelius*, *Melito* Bishop of *Sardis* did exhibit his apologetic oration. To him also, *Apollinaris* Bishop of *Hierapolis* in *Asia* dedicated his defence of the Christian Faith, and wrote five books against the Gentiles, and two concerning the Truth. Not long after, *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch* composed his three excellent books for the conviction of *Autolycus*, and *Miltiades* presented an apology, probably to the Emperor *Commodus*; and *Ta-*
tians

tian the Syrian, Scholar to *Justin Martyr*, wrote a book against the Gentiles. *Tertullian*, a man of great learning, the first among the *Latins* that appeared in this cause, under the reign of *Severus*, publish'd his Apologetic, directed to the magistrates of the *Roman* empire, besides his books *ad Gentes*, *ad Scapulam*, and many more. After him succeeded *Origen*, whose eight books against *Celsus*, did great service to the Christian cause. *Minucius Felix*, an eminent advocate at *Rome*, wrote a short, but a most elegant dialogue between *Octavius* and *Cæcilius*, which, as *Lactantius* observes *, shews how fit and able an advocate he would have been to assert the truth, had he wholly applyed himself to it. About the time of the Emperors *Gallus* and *Volusian*, *Cyprian* address'd himself in a discourse to *Demetrius*, Proconsul of *Afric*, in behalf of the Christians, and published his tract *de idolorum vanitate*, which is an abridgment of *Minucius's* dialogue. Toward the close of that age, under *Dioclesian*, *Arnobius*, who taught rhetoric at *Sicca* in *Afric*, being convinc'd of the truth of Christianity, could hardly at first make others believe he was in earnest; therefore to evidence his sincerity, he wrote seven books against the Gentiles, where he smartly and rationally pleads the Christians cause. *Lactantius*, his scholar, profess'd rhetoric at *Nicodemia*: He compos'd several discourses in defence of the Christian, and in subversion of the Gentile Religion. He was an eloquent man, but more happy in attacking his adversaries, than in establishing the principles of his own Religion, some whereof he seems not distinctly to have understood. The works of several of these Fathers are now lost, as the Apologies of *Quadratus*, *Aristides*, *Melito*, and *Apollinaris*; the rest yet remain, and may be read to advantage. These and other eminent worthies of the church at that time, did give noble antidotes against the heresies of the age; but many of their writings against heresies are now lost, only the works of *Irenæus* and *Tertullian* on that subject yet remain.

A third Advantage that helped forward the progress of Christianity, was the indefatigable zeal used in the propagation

* De Justitia, lib. 5. cap. 1. pag. m. 395.

pagation thereof. Every method was essayed to reclaim men from error, and bring them to the acknowledgement of the truth. The teachers of the primitive church preached boldly, prayed heartily for the reformation of mankind, solicited their neighbours who were yet strangers to the faith, instructed and informed new converts, and built them up in their most holy faith. Those who were of greater parts and eminency erected and instructed schools, where they publickly taught such as resorted to them, in the principles of the faith, affording them antidotes both against heathens and heretics. *Among us*, says Tatian *, *not only the rich and wealthy learn our philosophy, but even the poor are freely instructed: for the doctrine concerning God is greater than can be recompensed with gifts; therefore we admit all who are willing to learn, whether old or young.* And a little after he says, *All our virgins are sober and modest, and use to discourse of divine things even sitting at their distaffs.* No pains, no travel nor hardships were counted insuperable to enlarge the bounds of the Gospel-Church. *The divine and admirable disciples of the Apostles*, says Eusebius †, *built up the superstructures of the Churches, the foundations whereof the Apostles had laid in all places where they came; they every where promoted the preaching of the Gospel, sowing the seeds of heavenly doctrine through the whole world, to render a more plentiful harvest.* For many of the disciples then alive being inflamed with the love of a more heavenly philosophy, fulfilling the counsel of our Lord, distributed their estates to the poor; and leaving their own country, did the work of Evangelists to those who had never yet heard the Christian Faith, preaching Christ, and delivering the evangelical writings to them. No sooner had they planted the faith in any foreign countries, and ordained guides and pastors, to whom they committed the care of these new plantations, but they went to other nations, assisted by the grace and powerful working of the holy Spirit; for the divine Spirit, even to that very time, did perform wonderful works. So soon as ever they began to preach the Gospel,

* Tatiani Oratio contra Græcos, pag. m. 167, 168.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 37.

Gospel, the people flocked universally to them, and chearfully and heartily did worship the true God, the Creator of the world, piously and heartily believing in his name. In the number of these evangelical missionaries that were of the first Apostolical Succession, were Silas, Sylvanus, Crescens, Andronicus, Trophimus, Marcus, Aristarchus, and others; as afterward Pantænus, who went into India; Potbinus and Irenæus, from Smyrna came into France; and each of these two last became Bishop of Lyons one after another, and many more of that kind mentioned in the histories and martyrologies of the Church, who counted not their lives dear to them, so that they might finish their course with joy, and make known the mystery of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

*Fourthly, Christianity recommended itself to the world, by the admirable holy lives of its professors, which were so consonant to the laws of virtue and goodness, as could not but reconcile the unprejudiced part of the Gentile World to a good opinion of them, and vindicate their religion from the absurd cavils made against it by adversaries. Their holy lives could not fail to shew there was something more than human in their worship. The piety of these primitive Christians towards God, their sobriety toward themselves, and their justice, righteousness and charity toward others, are well explained and illustrated by the learned Dr. Cave, from their own writings, in his book entitled *Primitive Christianity*. A few testimonies to confirm it, shall suffice us at this time. Eusebius assures us *, *These divine and holy men the Apostles of Christ, how rude soever they were in speech, were yet of the most pure and holy lives, and had their minds adorned with all sorts of virtue.* Indeed such generally were the Christians in succeeding ages; they did not entertain the world only with a parcel of good words, but shewed their faith by their works, and proved the divinity of their religion by the heavenliness of their lives. The Christian, in *Minutius Felix*, says †, “ We despise the pride and superciliousness of philosophers, “ whom we know to be debauched corrupt men, adul-
“ terers*

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 24. † In Dialogo prope finem, pag. m. 88.

“terers and tyrants, always eloquent against the vices
 “of which themselves are most guilty. We measure
 “not wisdom by men’s habits, but by their minds and
 “manners ; nor do we speak great things so much
 “as we live them, glorying that we have attained
 “those things which they [*i.e.* the *Gentiles*] sought for,
 “but could never find. *Justin Martyr* tells the Em-
 peror *, “We *Christians* have renounced *Dæmons*, and
 “worship the only unbegotten God through his own
 “Son. We, who formerly did take pleasure in adulteries,
 “now embrace the strictest chastity ; who used magic
 “charms, have devoted ourselves to the immortal God.
 “We, who valued money and gain above all things,
 “do now cast what we have in common, distributing
 “to every one according to his need. We who by ha-
 “tred and slaughter raged against each other, and re-
 “fused to sit at the same fire with those who were not
 “of our tribe, since Christ’s coming into the world, fa-
 “miliarly converse together, pray for our enemies, and
 “the conversion of those who unjustly hate us, endea-
 “vouring to persuade them to live according to the ex-
 “cellent precepts of Christ, that so they may have just
 “ground to hope for the same rewards with us from the
 “God and Judge of the world.” Thereafter he informs
 the emperors of the precepts of holiness given by Christ
 in his excellent sermon on the mount.

Wonderful was the efficacy of this doctrine over the
 minds of men, which the Christian Apologists plead at
 every turn as an unanswerable evidence, that their religion
 was of God, since it made all sorts of men, who received
 it, chaste and temperate, quiet and peaceable, meek and
 modest, yea afraid of the least appearance of evil. When
 the heathens derided them for the mean and unpompous
 solemnities of their religion ; they declared, that God
 respected no man for external advantages : he delighted
 in the pure and holy soul ; he stood in no need of blood
 or smoke, perfumes or incense ; the best sacrifice was to
 offer a mind truly devoted to him, meekness and kind-
 ness ; an humble heart and an innocent life was the

Y 2

offering

* *Apologia secunda*, pag. 61.

offering with which God was well pleased ; a pious soul was the fittest temple for God to dwell in ; to do duty, to abstain from sin, to be intent upon prayer and praise, the truest festival. This religion of the Christians rendered their profession amiable to the world, and oft forced their enemies to fall down and say, *God was in them of a truth.*

Fifthly, The Christians then gained many Profelytes by their patience and constancy in their sufferings. They entertained the fiercest threatnings with an unshaken mind. They laughed at torments, courted flames, and went out to meet death in its blackest dress. They died rejoicing, and triumphed in the midst of greatest tortures. This continuing for some ages almost every day, did convince their enemies, that their religion was true, and that there was a supernatural power that did support them under all these calamities. *Lactantius* thus triumphs in the cause*, “ By reason of our wonderful courage, “ *says he*, our number is increased, many flocking to us “ from those that worship idols.—For when they “ see men torn in pieces by infinite variety of torments, “ and yet maintain patience unconquerable, able to tire “ out their tormentors, they begin to think, as they “ have ground to do, that the consent of so many, and “ the perseverance of such dying persons cannot be in “ vain and that patience itself, were it not from God, “ could not hold out under such racks and tortures. “ Thieves and men of robust bodies are not able to bear “ such tearing in pieces, they groan and cry out, being “ overcome with pain, because not endued with patience “ inspired from heaven : but our very children and wo- “ men, to say nothing of our men, do with silence con- “ quer their tormentors ; nor can the hottest fire force “ a groan from them. Let the *Romans* go and boast of “ their *Mutius* and *Regulus*, of the one for delivering “ himself up to his enemies to be put to death, because “ he was ashamed to live a prisoner ; and the other be- “ ing taken by his enemies, did burn his hand to save “ his life, by which he obtained a pardon that he did not “ deserve. Behold with us the weaker sex, and the most “ tender

* De Justitia, lib. 5. cap. 13, 14, pag. m. 434, & seqq.

“ tender age, suffer all the parts of their body to be
 “ torn and burnt, not out of necessity, for they might
 “ shun it, but out of choice, because they believe in
 “ God. This is that true virtue which the philosophers
 “ vainly boast of, but never really possessed.” This,
 and more to the same purpose, he there elegantly urges
 to the honour of our religion. By the force of such ar-
 guments *Justin Martyr* confesses he was brought over
 from being a *Platonic* Philosopher to become a Chri-
 stian; for when he observed the Christians, whom he
 had often heard calumniated, not afraid of terrible deaths,
*I thought with my self, says he *, that it was not possible*
such persons could wallow in vice and luxury; it being the
interest of vicious people to shun death, to dissemble with
magistrates, and to do every thing to save their lives. *Ter-*
tullian tells *Scapula*, in the conclusion of his address to
 him †, ‘Tis to no purpose to think this sect will fail, which
 you’ll see the more built up, the faster it is cut down: for
 who can behold such eminent patience, and not have some
 scruple in his mind, and begin to inquire the cause of it?
 and when once he knows the truth, he himself immediately
 follows it. The Heathen themselves, as *Arrian*, in his
 commentary on *Epietus*, owns ‡, that the *Galileans* did
 undergo death and torments with courage, but ascribes
 it to fury and custom. *Lucian*, an avowed enemy of the
 Christians, says ||, *These miserable wretches or devils, οἱ*
κακοδαίμονες, do persuade those of their own party that they
shall surely be immortal, and live for ever; upon which ac-
count they despise death, and many of them offer themselves
to it. Hence *Julian* the Emperor, called the *Apostate*,
 counted it policy not to put the Christians openly to
 death, because he envied them the honour of being mar-
 tyrs; since he perceived they were like new mown grass,
 the oftner it was cut down, the thicker it sprung up
 again **. We may hear more of the holy lives of the
 primitive Christians, of their answers to the accusations of

Y 3

the

* *Apologia prima, operum pag. 50.*

† *Ad Scapulam cap. 5. operum pag. 92.*

‡ *Lib. 4. cap. 7. pag. m. 407.*

|| *Lucian. de morte Peregrini, operum Tom. 2. pag. 763.*

** *Greg. Nazianzen. in Julianum oratio 1.*

the Heathen, and their patience under sufferings, in the sequel of this treatise. Mean time what we have advanced does discover several things God in his good providence made use of, for the happy Progress and Propagation of Christianity over the world, notwithstanding all the hardships which Christians then endured : and this, with some other things relating to our subject, may be further illustrated by a short view of the persecutions raised against the Church, before the time of *Constantine the Great*.

The first who raised a general Persecution against the Christians, was the Emperor *Nero*, of whom *Tertullian* tells the *Gentiles*, and for the confirmation thereof appeals to their public records* ; *We glory*, says he, *in such an author of our Persecution : any body who knows him, may understand, that nothing but what is eminently good could be condemned by Nero*. He was a Prince of such brutish and extravagant manners, as their own writers scruple not to call him a beast in human shape, the very monster of mankind. He was guilty of the most unbounded pride, ambition, drunkenness, luxury, and all manner of debauchery ; yea, of sodomy and incest, which he attempted to commit with his own mother. But cruelty was his predominant ; he dispatched the most part of the senate, put to death his own tutor *Seneca*, *Lucan* the poet, and many others ; nay violated the laws of nature, falling upon his own relations, being privy to, if not guilty of the death of his father *Claudius*. He killed his two wives *Octavia* and *Poppæa*, poisoned his brother *Britannicus* ; and to complete all sent an assassine to kill his mother *Agrippina*, whom he abhorred for the free admonition she gave him. *He wanted*, says *Eusebius* †, *this to be added to his other titles, to be called the first Emperor who persecuted the Christian Religion*. He published laws for suppressing it, and putting to death those who professed it, as appears by an inscription found in *Spain* ‡ ; for he seems

* Apolog. cap. 6. pag. 23.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 25

‡ NERONI. CL. CAES. AVG. PONT. MAX. OB. PROVINC. LATRONIB. ET. HIS. QVI. NOVAM. GENERI. HVM. SVPERSTITION. INCVLCA. PVRGATAM. Gruteri Inscript. pag. 238. Apud Dr. Cave's *Primitive Christianity*, pag. 322.

seems to have carried his persecution even to that country. Among other instances of his madness, he set *Rome* on fire, in the 10th year of his reign, *Anno Dom.* 65. The conquering flames reducing the far greatest part of it, even ten regions of fourteen, into ashes, laying waste houses and temples, and all venerable antiquities, and monuments of that place, which had been preserved for so many ages, with great reverence; *Nero* himself beholding the same with pleasure from *Mecænas's* tower, and in the habit of a player, singing the destruction of *Troy*. When the people would have searched the ruins of their houses for treasures, he forbade them. This act exposed him to the hatred of an injured people, which he endeavoured to remove by promises and rewards, by consulting the *Sybilline* books, and public supplication to the Gods. Notwithstanding all this, *Tacitus* says *, *The infamy could not be wiped off: the people still believed the burning of the city to have been done by his order. To abolish this rumor, he derived the odium of it upon those who are commonly called Christians, from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius was crucified under Pontius Pilate. Tho' the superstition was a little borne down, yet it did spread again, not only over Judæa, but even through the city of Rome itself, where, says he, all evil things meet, and are had in reputation. Therefore they were seized who confessed themselves to be Christians, and by their discovery a great multitude, whom not the burning of the city, but common hatred made criminal. They were treated, when dying, with all instances of scorn and cruelty, were wrapped up in the skins of wild beasts, and worried by dogs; others were crucified, and others burned alive, that when day-light failed, they might serve for torches in the night. These spectacles Nero exhibited in his own gardens, as if they had been a Circensian game, himself being among the people in the habit of a coachman. Yet tho' severity was used against those, says Tacitus, who deserved death, the people beheld them with pity, as done not for the public good, but to satisfy the cruelty of one man. This persecution continued a full year, even that after the burning of Rome, Anno Dom. 66.*

Y 4

Divine

* *Annalium lib. 15. cap. 44. pag. m. 364.*

Divine Providence so ordered, that the Church had got some footing in the world before a general persecution did arise, that Christians might be the better able to weather out the storm. There were now 33 years, or thereabouts, past after Christ's Death, in which the Church had been propagated far and near; nor did the storm continue so long, as to wear out the Saints of the most High. It raged in other parts of the Empire as well as at the metropolis: In it suffered the Apostle *Paul*, beheaded at *Rome*, and also the Apostle *Peter*, as our Lord foretold, *John* xxi. 18. but in what year, or in what place, is not certain. *Tecla*, *Torques*, *Torquatus*, *Marcellus*, and several others suffered also. But there are many legendary stories in the *Roman* martyrologies, which deserve no credit; concerning which, the curious Reader may consult the learned *Spanheim* *.

The short reigns of *Galba*, *Otho* and *Vitellius*, who are called by some, *Monthly Emperors*, and the merciful disposition of *Vespasian* and *Titus* his son, gave some rest to the Christians, till *Domitian* succeeding to the empire, began a new persecution. He was a man of a temper vastly different from that of his father *Vespasian*, and his brother *Titus*; he was lazy and unactive, ill-natured and suspicious, griping and covetous, proud and insolent; yea so wickedly ambitious, as to affect divinity in all publick edicts, assuming to himself, and requiring others to give him the titles of *Lord* and *God*. He never truly loved any man. When he pretended kindness, it was a sign of that man's ruin to whom it was offered. His cruelty he first exercised upon the flies, thousands whereof he dispatched every day; and next he tried it upon men of all ranks, putting to death the most illustrious senators, and persons of greatest honour, upon most trifling pretences, and oft for no cause at all. *He had a portion*, says *Tertullian* †, *of Nero's cruelty*, but in this he exceeded him, *Nero was content to command executions to be done at a distance, while Domitian took pleasure to see them done before his own eyes*. The Christians, alas!

* Hist. Eccl. in Fol. col. 566, & seqq. † Apolog. cap. 6. pag. 43.

alas! did bear the heaviest load of his rage and malice, whom he every where persecuted either by death or banishment. *John* the Evangelist was sent for to *Rome*, and by his order banished into *Patmos*. He commanded those to be killed who were of the stock of *David* in *Judea* *. He put to death his cousin-german *Fl. Clemens*, at that time consul, for giving a good testimony to Christ, and banished his wife *Fl. Domitilla*, his own kinswoman, into the island *Pontia*, upon the same account. The Persecution began in the 92d year of the Christian *Æra*, 26 years after that by *Nero*, and continued to *Domitian's* death, which happened about three years after. His bloody practices render'd him intolerable to his own friends and servants, who conspired against him (his own wife *Domitia* being of the confederacy) and killed him. His successor *Cocceius Nerva* abrogated his acts, and recalled those he had proscribed or banished. Among these, *John* the Apostle took the benefit of the act, quitted *Patmos*, and retired to *Ephesus*. *Dion*, a Roman historian, says †, *Nerva absolved all those who were counted guilty of impiety against the gods, and recalled the banished to their own country*; by whom he understands the Christians.

The third Persecution commenced under *Trajan*, whom *Nerva* appointed to be his successor. He was a Prince of excellent virtues, who acted usually by the advice of the senate, and they, to recompense him, gave him the title of *Optimus*. He conversed freely with all men, desiring rather to be loved than feared by the people. The glory of all this is exceedingly stained in the records of the Church, by his severe proceedings against the Christians. He looked upon the religion of the Empire as undermined by this new way of worship; that the number of Christians grew formidable, and might possibly endanger the tranquillity of the *Roman* state; and that there was no better way to secure to himself the favour of the Gods, especially in the wars, than to

VIR-

* Euseb. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 19.

† Dion Cassius in vita Cocceii Nervæ, non longè ab initio.

vindicate himself against the Christians. Accordingly he issued out orders to proceed against them as illegal societies, erected and acting contrary to the laws. He look'd upon Christian Assemblies as *Heteriæ*, or unlawful corporations, and under this pretence endeavoured to suppress them; and in the mean time commanded Christians either to sacrifice to the Gods, or be punished as contemners of them. The chief of those who obtain'd the crown of martyrdom in this Persecution were, *Clemens* Bishop of *Rome*, *Simeon* of *Jerusalem*, and *Ignatius* of *Antioch*. The last of these *Trajan* himself condemned, and ordered to be sent to *Rome*, and there thrown to wild beasts. His desire for martyrdom was great, as his words recorded in *Eusebius's* † history do declare, “From *Syria* even to *Rome*, says he, I fight
 “ with beasts by land and sea, night and day, bound
 “ with ten Leopards, that is, a guard of soldiers, who
 “ are worse for the favours I do them. I am instructed
 “ by their injuries, yet by this I am not justified. I
 “ wish I may enjoy the beasts that are prepared for me,
 “ who I pray may make quick dispatch with me; them
 “ I will allure to devour me speedily, and that from
 “ fear they may not abstain from touching me, as they
 “ have not touched others; and if they will not, I'll
 “ even force them thereunto. I know what is best for
 “ me. Now I begin to be a disciple, desiring nothing
 “ of things seen or unseen, that so I may gain Christ.
 “ Let fire, cross, troops of violent beasts, scattering
 “ of bones, convulsion of members, contrition of the
 “ whole body, and all the torments of the devil come
 “ upon me, that I may enjoy Jesus Christ.” *Jerom*
 adds *, “ That when this *Ignatius* was condemned to be
 “ actually thrown to the wild beasts, and heard the lions
 “ roaring, he said, I am Christ's wheat, which the
 “ teeth of wild beasts shall grind, that I may be found
 “ pure bread.” He died in the 11th year of *Trajan*.

This Persecution is placed by *Eusebius* ‖, and by many others after him, in the 10th year of *Trajan*, the 108th of the Christian *Æra*, tho' I find *Spanhemius F. F.* thinks it

† Lib. 3. cap. 36.

* Catal. Script. in Ignatio.

‖ In Chronico.

it began five years sooner †. It raged, as in other parts of the Empire, so especially in the provinces of *Pontus* and *Bithynia*, where *Pliny* the younger then governed as *Proprætor* with proconsular power and dignity; who seeing the vast numbers of Christians, who were indicted by their accusers, and pressed on of their own accord to gain the honour of being martyrs, and that to proceed to severity with all who came, would be in a manner to lay desolate these provinces, he thought proper to write to the Emperor concerning this matter, that he might know his pleasure concerning it. Since his letter contains a testimony from a Heathen concerning the propagation of the Christian Religion in these times, and also acquaints us so exactly with the state of Christians, their innocency and integrity, and the manner then of proceeding against them, I here insert a translation thereof.

C. Plinius, *to the Emperor Trajan.* *

IT is my custom, Sir, in all affairs wherein I doubt, to have recourse to you; for who can better either sway my irresolution, or instruct my ignorance? I have never been heretofore present at the examination and trial of Christians, and therefore know not what the crime is, or how far it is wont to be punished, or how to proceed in these enquiries. Nor was I a little at a loss, whether regard be to be had to the difference of age, whether the young and the weak are to be distinguished from the more strong and aged; whether place may be allowed to repentance, and it may be any advantage to him who was once a Christian, to cease to be so; whether the name alone, without other offences that go along with the name, ought to be punished. In the mean time, towards those, who as Christians have been brought before me,

† Hist. Christiana, *Fol.* col. 655.

* Plinii lib. 10. Epist. 97. pag. m. 387, & seqq. & apud Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 33.

‘ me, I have taken this course ; I asked them if they
‘ were Christians. If they confessed, I asked them once
‘ again, threatening punishment ; if they persisted, I
‘ commanded them to be executed. For I did not at
‘ all doubt but that whatever their confession was, their
‘ stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy ought to be pu-
‘ nished. Others who were guilty of the like madness,
‘ because they were *Roman* citizens, I adjudged them to
‘ be transmitted to *Rome*. While things thus proceeded,
‘ the error spreading, as is usual, more cases offered.
‘ A nameless libel was presented, containing the de-
‘ signations of many, who denied themselves to be or
‘ have been Christians. These, when after my example
‘ they invocated the Gods, and offered wine and incense
‘ to your statue, which for that purpose I commanded
‘ to be brought, with the images of the Gods, and had
‘ moreover blasphemed Christ, which ’tis said none who
‘ are true Christians can be compelled to do, I dismissed.
‘ Others mentioned in the libel confessed themselves
‘ Christians, but presently denied it ; they had been such,
‘ but had renounced it, some by the space of three years,
‘ others many years since ; and one 25 years ago. All
‘ these paid their veneration to your statue, and to the
‘ images of the Gods, and blasphemed Christ. They
‘ affirmed the whole sum of their sect or error lay in
‘ this, That they used on a set solemn day, to meet to-
‘ gether before sun-rising, and to sing among them-
‘ selves a hymn to Christ, as the God whom they wor-
‘ shipped ; and to oblige themselves by an oath, not
‘ to commit any wickedness, but to abstain from theft,
‘ robbery and adultery, to keep faith, to restore any
‘ pledge intrusted with them ; which being done, to
‘ depart for that time, and to meet again at a common
‘ meal, to partake of a promiscuous and harmless food,
‘ which they laid aside after my Edict, according to
‘ your order, prohibiting the *Heteriæ* or unlawful as-
‘ semblies to be kept. To satisfy my self in the truth
‘ hereof, I commanded two maids, called *Diaconesses*, to
‘ be examin’d upon the rack ; but I perceiv’d nothing
‘ but a wicked and immoderate superstition, and there-
fore

‘ fore delaying any further process, I have sent for your
 ‘ advice. For the case seemed to me worthy to be con-
 ‘ sulted, especially considering the great numbers that
 ‘ are in danger; for very many of all ages and ranks,
 ‘ both men and women, are and will be called in ques-
 ‘ tion; the contagion of this superstition having over-
 ‘ spread not only cities, but towns and country villages,
 ‘ which yet seems possible to be stopt and cured. ’Tis
 ‘ very evident, that the temples, which were almost
 ‘ quite forsaken, begin to be frequented; that the holy
 ‘ rites and solemnities of a long time neglected, are set
 ‘ on foot again, and that sacrifices from all parts begin
 ‘ to be sold, which hitherto found very few to buy them;
 ‘ whence ’tis easy to conjecture what multitudes might be
 ‘ reclaimed, if place be given to repentance.’

This letter seems to be writ about the year of our
 Lord 107, the ninth of *Trajan’s* Reign, the Emperor
 lying then at *Antioch*, in order to his wars in the East,
 where the persecution was very hot. By this account
 we see, that tho’ the enemies of our religion load it with
 hard names, as a wicked and immoderate superstition, yet
 at the same time they own it innocent and unblameable.
 Tho’ the severity of the persecution might tempt some
 to turn renegadoes, yet so vast was the propagation and
 spreading that Christianity had then made in these parts,
 that this great man *Pliny* the younger knew not how to
 deal with them. To direct him therefore in this affair,
 the Emperor returned him the following Rescript.

*Trajan to Pliny greeting. **

‘ **A**S to the manner of your procedure, my *Secundus*,
 ‘ in examining the causes of those that have been
 ‘ brought before you for being Christians, you have
 ‘ taken the course you ought to take; for no general
 ‘ law can be framed so as to provide for all cases. Let
 ‘ them not be sought for, but if they be accused and
 ‘ convicted, let them be punished. Yet if any denies
 ‘ himself to be a Christian, and gives evidence of it, by
 ‘ suppli-

* *Plinii Secundi lib. 10, Epist. 98.*

‘ supplicating to our Gods, tho’ heretofore he has been
 ‘ suspected, let him be pardoned upon his repentance
 ‘ But as for libels published without the name of the
 ‘ authors, let them not be regarded as to the crimes they
 ‘ charge, for that were an ill precedent, and is not usual
 ‘ in our reign.’

Tertullian speaking of this edict, or rescript, calls it †
A sentence confounded by a strange necessity; it allows them
not to be sought for, as if they were innocent, and yet com-
mands them to be punished as guilty; it spares and rages, dis-
sembles and yet punishes. Why does he entangle himself in his
own censure? If he condemn them, why does he not burn
them out? If he thinks them not to be searched out, why
does he not acquit them? However, by means of this
 law the edge of the enemies was taken off; tho’ the po-
 pular rage might in some places still continue, yet the
 general force and rigour of the persecution did cease and
 abate. About this time *Trajan* abode at *Antioch*, where
 was a dreadful earthquake, by which thousands were
 killed, and far greater numbers maimed and wounded.
Pedo the Consul lost his life, and *Trajan* himself, had he
 not escaped out of a window, had undergone the same
 fate. Afterwards he won great victories over the *Arme-*
nians, Parthians, Arabians, Assyrians, Iberians and
Persians. He received embassies from the *Indies*, tho’
 their name was little known at that time. He died of a
 dropfy ‡ at a town in *Cilicia*, then called *Selinus*, and af-
 terward *Trajanople*, in the 64th year of his age, having
 reigned 19 years, 6 months and 15 days. *Pliny* the
 younger wrote an excellent panegyric upon him, which
 is yet extant. No doubt he was a Prince adorned with
 many virtues; but his cruelty in persecuting the Chri-
 stians, his incontinence in love of boys, and his excess in
 wine, stain his glory, and shew the flattery of his admirers.

Hadrian, the adopted Son of *Trajan*, succeeded in the
 empire, and continued the persecution of the Christians
 raised

† *Apolog. cap. 2. operum pag. 19.*

‡ *Dion. Cassius in vita Trajani, prope finem.*

raised by his predecessor ; or rather was author of a fourth ; so *Sulpitius Severus* calls it *. 'Tis true we do not find any laws which this emperor made against the Christians, but those of his predecessors were still in force ; and the heathens were ready in most places to run upon this errand of their own accord, and to sacrifice innocent Christians to their own spite and malice. *Jerom* particularly tells us †, *That this emperor having spent a whole winter at Athens, gave his presence at the Eleusinian ceremonies, and was initiated in almost all the mysteries and rites of heathenish Greece, which gave occasion to those who hated the Christians without any particular warrant to fall upon them.* That this was a grievous persecution, appears from the apologies which *Quadratus* and *Aristides*, tho' now they be lost, presented to the emperor ; and from what *Tertullian* writes ‡, *That when Arrius Antoninus (whom many conceive to be the same person who succeeded Hadrian in the empire) was Proconsul of Asia, and severely persecuted the Christians, the whole of them in that city, where he at the time was, as one man beset his tribunal, openly confessing themselves to be Christians. He, amazed at the multitude, caused some few of them to be executed, telling the rest, that if they had a mind to end their lives, they had precipices and halters enough at home, and need not come hither for execution.* And *Eusebius* informs us, *That Sere-nius Granianus, one of the following Proconsuls, did write to Hadrian to mitigate the persecution : which the emperor commanded to be done by a rescript || directed to Minucius Fundanus, his successor in that province.* The like he did in other places of the empire, as appears by *Melito's* Apology, a part whereof is preserved by *Eusebius*, lib. 4. cap. 26. *Dion Cassius*, a heathen, says **, *That tho' Hadrian reigned with great moderation and humanity, yet for putting to death many good men, both in the beginning of his reign, and before he ended his life, he was under great infamy.* By these good men he seems to intend the Christians.

3

As

* *Sacræ Historiæ* lib. 2.

† *Catalog. Scriptorum in Quadrato.*

‡ *Ad Scapulam*, cap. 5. pag. 92.

|| *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 4. cap. 9. Extat etiam ad calcem *Apologiæ secundæ* Just. Martyris, operum pag. 99.

** *Xiphilini Epitome Dionis*, pag. m. 269.

As to the duration of this persecution, the learned *Spanhemius* reckons it commenced in the second year of *Hadrian's* Reign, and was stopped in the tenth, which is *A. D. vulg.* 126. when his *Decennalia* were celebrated*.

Hadrian was a Prince devoted to the muses, to study and travels, yet one in whom 'tis hard to say whether vice or virtue had the upper hand. He highly honoured the senate, and would wait on the consuls to their houses, and yet was most ambitious of honour. He punished the revolting *Jews*, who were headed by *Barchochab*, who pretended himself to be the *Messias*. He died in the 21st year of his reign. Tho' there were many who obtained a crown of martyrdom in this persecution, yet the *Greek* and *Roman* Church have filled their martyrologies with fabulous circumstances of several martyrs, and names of others, for which they have no real foundation. And therefore we are not rashly to believe every thing writ concerning them by *Simeon Metaphrastes*, *Gregory of Tours*, the *Clementine Recognitions*, and gathered together by *Surius*, *Bollandus*, and even by Cardinal *Baronius* in his annals, to serve the purposes of the *Romish* Church, and their legendary traditions of miracles of saints, to support their idolatrous worship†. This Emperor on his death-bed, according to *Spartian* his historian, spoke concerning his soul like one *without God and Hope in this world*‡; which shews what uncertain expectations the Heathens

* *Spanhem.* FF. Hist. Christiana in Folio, col. 656; 657.

† *Spanh.* FF. Hist. Christ. in Fol. col. 666, & seqq.

‡ *Spartiani* *Hadrianus* Cæsar, prope finem.

*Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes, comesque corporis,
Qua nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida, nudula?
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos.*

In English.

My little pleasant wandring Soul,
Which in this Body dwells,
To what strange Place dost thou retire,
Pale, rigid naked Cells?
The pretty Jests that thou us'd here,
Thou there no more shall tell.

Heathens had of any future happiness, being destitute of divine revelation.

Antoninus Pius succeeded in the empire ; he continued the persecution, wherein many received the crown of martyrdom, *whose names are writ in the lamb's book of life*. For stopping the persecution, *Justin Martyr* exhibited an Apology to the Emperor, which produced the following answer to the common council of *Asia* *.

“ The Emperor *Cæsar Titus Ælius Hadrian Antoninus*
“ *Augustus Pius* High-Priest, the fifteenth time *Tribune*,
“ third time *Consul*, father of his country, to the com-
“ mon assembly of *Asia*, greeting. I am very well as-
“ sured that the Gods themselves will take care that this
“ kind of men shall not escape, it being much more
“ their concern than it can be yours, to punish those
“ who refuse to worship them ; whom you do but con-
“ firm in their opinions, while you oppress and accuse
“ them as atheists, and object other crimes against them,
“ which you cannot prove. Nor can a more acceptable
“ service be done them ; for being accused, they chuse to
“ die, rather than live, for that God whom they wor-
“ ship ; by which means they become victorious. As
“ for the earthquakes that have been, or yet do happen,
“ it may not be amiss to advertise you, whose minds are
“ ready to despond under any such accidents, to com-
“ pare your case with theirs. They at such a time are
“ much more secure and confident in their God ; whereas
“ you seeming to neglect the Gods and their Rites, are
“ ignorant of that Deity which they worship ; and
“ therefore envy and persecute to the death those who
“ worship him. Concerning these things several gover-
“ nours of provinces have heretofore writ to my father,
“ of sacred memory, to whom he returned this answer,
“ *That these men should be no way molested, unless it ap-*
“ *peared that they attempted something against the Roman*
“ *Empire*. Yea, I my self have received many letters
“ con-

* Extat ad calcem Apolog. 2. Just. Martyris, operum pag. 100. edit. 1686, in Folio, & apud Eusebium, Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 13.

“ concerning them, to which I answered according to
 “ my father’s opinion, which I propose to imitate. After
 “ all which, if any shall go on to create them trouble,
 “ merely because they are such men (*i. e. Christians*) let
 “ him that is indicted of the crime be absolved, tho’ it
 “ appear he be such a man, and let the informer under-
 “ go punishment.—Published at *Ephesus* in the place
 “ of the common assembly of *Asia*.” This letter
 is calculated, from the year of the consuls, to have
 been sent in the year of our Lord 140 *vulg.* the third of
 the reign of *Antoninus Pius*. The Christians had some
 tranquillity for the rest of his reign. He died, as is
 commonly reckoned, on the 7th of *March*, of the year
 of our Lord 160.

To *Antoninus Pius* succeeded *Marcus Aurelius Antoni-
 nus Philosophus*, and his brother *Lucius Verus*. The wri-
 ters of *Marc Antoninus’s* Life speak great things of him,
 as a good man and a great philosopher, but withal zea-
 lous of heathen rites to the highest degree of supersti-
 tion. He had from his youth been educated in the *Salian*
 College, all the offices whereof he had gone through*,
 affecting an imitation of *Numa Pompilius* the first master
 of religious ceremonies among the *Romans*, from whom
 he pretended to derive his original. What thoughts he
 had of the Christians, appears from this, that he ascribes
 their resolute undergoing of death to meer stubbornness
 and obstinacy †. He was then easily set on by the priests
 and philosophers about him into a prejudice against Chri-
 stianity, and persuaded to set on foot the fifth persecu-
 tion against the Christians, whom he endeavoured to sup-
 press by new laws and edicts, exposing them to all the
 malice of their enemies. The persecution commenced
 in the eastern parts about the 7th. year of his reign, and
 continued for several years; it spread into the West,
 especially *France*, where it raged with great severity. That
 the conflict was very sharp, may be guessed by the croud
 of Apologies presented to the Emperor by *Justin Martyr*,
Melito,

* Jul. Capitolinus in Antonino in vitis Cæsarum, pag. m. 152.

† τῶν ἐς ἐαυτὸν, lib. 2. §. 3. pag. 106.

Melito, Athenagoras and Apollinaris. In *Asia*, *Polycarp* Bishop of *Smyrna* was among the first martyrs, twelve others from *Philadelphia* suffered with him.

The acts of *Polycarp's* martyrdom, recorded by *Eusebius* * are a most beautiful piece of antiquity, but too large to be here inserted. The sum of the whole is,
 “ When his persecutors came to his house, he was in bed;
 “ tho’ he might have saved himself by slipping to another
 “ house, he refused, saying, *The will of the Lord be*
 “ *done.* He came down cheerfully, and ordered meat to
 “ be set before them; requesting for himself only one
 “ hour for prayer, which being granted, he continued
 “ two hours together with great assistance of divine grace.
 “ Prayer being ended, he was set upon an ass, and car-
 “ ried to *Smyrna*, and there received by *Herod*, an *Ire-*
 “ *narcha* or Justice of the peace, into his chariot; who
 “ desired him to say, *My Lord the Emperor, or to sa-*
 “ *crifice.* This he would not at any rate comply with;
 “ therefore the angry judge thrust him out of his chariot
 “ with such violence, as he hurt his leg in the fall. No-
 “ thing daunted, he went cheerfully to the place of exe-
 “ cution; to which when he with the judge came, a
 “ confused noise did arise, but a voice was heard by
 “ many of our friends (says my author) †, but no per-
 “ son seen speaking, saying, *Polycarp be strong, quit*
 “ *thy self like a man.* The Proconsul began to persuade
 “ him, *Regard*, said he, *thy great age, swear by the genius*
 “ *of Cæsar, say with us, take away the impious, swear,*
 “ *blaspheme Christ, and I will release thee.* To which
 “ *Polycarp* answered, *These fourscore and six years have I*
 “ *served him, and he never did me any harm; How shall I*
 “ *blaspheme my Saviour?*” (These years *Spanhemius*
 reckons ‡ to have commenced from *Polycarp's* conversion
 to Christianity, he must then at his sufferings have been very
 old.) “ The Proconsul still importuned him to swear
 “ by *Cæsar's* Genius. To whom he replied, since you
 “ are so vainly ambitious, that I should swear by the

Z 2

“ Em

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 15. Vide etiam de Polycarpi martyrio Eccl. Smyrnenfis Epistolam, cum Ignatii Epistolis, editis Oxoniæ 1709, pag. 62, & seqq. † Ibid. ‡ Historia Christiana in Folio, col. 665.

“ Emperor’s Genius, as you call it, as if you knew not
 “ who I am, hear my confession, I am a Christian ; if
 “ you have a mind to learn the Christian Religion, ap-
 “ point me a time, I’ll instruct you. The Proconsul
 “ advised him rather to instruct the people. He an-
 “ swered, to you I rather chuse to address my discourse ;
 “ for we are commanded by the laws of our religion,
 “ to give to Princes and the Powers ordained of God,
 “ all the honour and reverence that’s not contrary to the
 “ precepts of Christianity. As for the common people,
 “ I do not think fit to make any Apology to them.
 “ The Proconsul then threatned him with wild beasts.
 “ Call for them, says the martyr, for we are determined
 “ not to change from better to worse, counting it fit only
 “ to turn from vice to virtue. Then said the Proconsul,
 “ I have a fire that shall tame thee. Thou threatenest
 “ me, said *Polycarp*, with a fire that burns for an hour,
 “ and is presently extinct, but art ignorant of the fire
 “ of eternal damnation, and the future judgment refer-
 “ ved for the wicked in the world to come. But why
 “ delayest thou? Bring forth whatever thou hast a
 “ mind to. After this, and other words spoke by the
 “ martyr with cheerful confidence and divine grace, the
 “ Proconsul caused the Crier to make proclamation, *Polycarp*
 “ has confessed himself to be a Christian. At
 “ which the *Jews* and *Gentiles* gave a shout, saying,
 “ This is the great Doctor of *Asia*, and the father of the
 “ Christians ; this is the destroyer of our Gods, that
 “ teaches men not to do sacrifice, nor to worship these
 “ Deities.

“ *Polycarp* being then ordered to be burned alive, the
 “ *Jews* were particularly active to bring faggots and
 “ fewel to the fire. When the officer came to nail him
 “ to the stake, he desired them to forbear, assuring
 “ them, that he who gave him strength to endure the
 “ fire, would enable him without nailing to stand im-
 “ moveable in the hottest flames. So they only tied
 “ him, he standing like a sheep ready for the slaughter,
 “ designed as an acceptable sacrifice, poured out his soul
 “ in a pathetic prayer ; which being done, the fire was
 “ blown

Ch. 3. *Christians by* M. Antoninus Philosophus. 341

“ blown up. Behold a wonder, *says our author* *, seen
“ by us who were present, that we might declare it to
“ others. The flames disposing themselves into an arch
“ like the sails of a ship swelled with the wind, gently
“ encircled the body of the martyr, who stood all the
“ while, not like burning flesh, but like gold or silver
“ purified in the furnace, his body sending forth a de-
“ lightful smell like frankincense or some costly spices, to
“ our senses. The infidels exasperated by the miracle,
“ commanded a spear-man to go near and run him
“ through with a sword, which he had no sooner done,
“ but such a quantity of blood issued from the wound as
“ extinguished the fire. After this his body was burnt to
“ ashes, and the Christians gathered up his bones, and
“ decently buried them.” Thus died this Apostolical
Man about the hundredth year of his age, in the year of
our Lord 167. The amphitheatre where he suffered,
says a late traveller into these parts †, is yet in a great
measure remaining: in the two opposite sides thereof,
are the dens where the lions were wont to be kept.

In this Persecution many others received the crown of
martyrdom. At *Rome*, *Ptolemy* and *Lucius*, *Justin* the
martyr and his companions were first scourged, and then
beheaded. In *France*, the letter writ by the churches of
Lyons and *Vien* to those of *Asia* and *Phrygia*, preserved
by *Eusebius* ||, informs us, “ That it was impossible for
“ them exactly to describe the cruelty of their enemies,
“ and the severity of those torments the martyrs suffered,
“ being banished from their houses, forbid to shew their
“ heads, reproached, beaten, hurried from place to
“ place, plundered, stoned, imprisoned, with all ex-
“ pressions of ungovernable rage and fury. But *the*
“ *sufferings of this present life are not to be compared with*
“ *the glory that shall be revealed.* Particularly *Vettius*
“ *Epagathus*, a man full of zeal and piety, who seeing
“ his Fellow-Christians unjustly dragged before the judg-
“ ment-seat, required leave of the president, that he
Z 3 “ might

* Euseb. lib. 4. cap. 15. Ecclesiæ Smyrnenfis Epistola, ut supra
cap. 15. pag. 72.

† Tho. Smith Epistola de septem Asiæ Ecclesiis, pag. 164.

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 1.

“ might plead his brethrens cause, and openly shew
 “ that they were not guilty of the least wickedness or
 “ impiety. But the court not daring to grant him so
 “ reasonable a request, the judge took the advantage to
 “ ask him, *If he was a Christian?* Which he publickly
 “ owned, and suffered martyrdom. *Blandina*, a lady
 “ of singular virtue, but of whom the Church doubted
 “ how she would hold out to make a resolute confession,
 “ by reason of the weakness of her sex, and tenderness
 “ of her education, yet she did bear all with such invin-
 “ cible magnanimity, that her tormentors, tho’ they
 “ took their turns from morning to night, and plied
 “ her with all kind of racks and tortures, were yet forced
 “ to give over, and confess themselves overcome; won-
 “ dring that a body so broken and mangled should yet
 “ be able to draw its breath, and declared, that one of
 “ these torments was sufficient to take away her life,
 “ much more so many and so great. But her happy
 “ soul gained strength by suffering, and mitigated all
 “ the sense of her pain, by repeating these words, *I*
 “ *am a Christian.* *Biblis*, tho’ at first she fainted, yet
 “ recovered her courage, and expired in the midst of
 “ most acute tortures. *Bothinus* Bishop of *Lyons*, an
 “ infirm man above ninety years old, was beaten and
 “ stoned to death. *Sanctus* a Deacon of *Vien*, together
 “ with *Maturus*, were exposed in the amphitheatre, tor-
 “ mented and imprisoned several days together, pre-
 “ sented to wild beasts, placed in an iron chair red-hot,
 “ and at last run through with a spear. *Attalus*, a Ro-
 “ man Citizen, disgracefully led up and down as in
 “ triumph, and then beheaded; as was also *Alexander*
 “ the Physician, a *Phrygian*, who readily professed him-
 “ self a Christian; and *Ponticus*, a youth of fifteen
 “ years of age, who through all methods of cruelty
 “ and torment, which might have shaken a more mature
 “ age, entered the kingdom of heaven.” These and
 some others, the circumstances of whose sufferings are
 more at large preserved by *Eusebius*, in the place last
 cited, not only cheerfully endured all extremities them-
 selves,

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selves, but also encouraged and strengthened others boldly to contend for the faith.

At length the Emperor *Marcus Antoninus* seems to have relaxed the persecution, upon this occasion. He being engaged in a war with the *Quadi*, a people inhabiting those parts of *Germany* called now *Austria* and *Bavaria*; his army was under great difficulties, being like to perish with thirst, under a warm sun and hot soil, where they could have no water. In this strait his officers told him, that there was in his army a legion of Christians called the *Melytenian*, and there was nothing but these Christians could obtain it, by prayer. The Emperor therefore desired, that they might call upon their God, which they did, “ Falling down upon our knees, as is
“ our custom, says *Eusebius* *, our enemies thought this
“ an unusual sight; but a more wonderful followed, for
“ it is said, that suddenly there came upon the enemies
“ thunder, with fire and lightning, which ruined and
“ put them to flight. But a pleasant shower came upon
“ the *Roman* Army to refresh them, who were like to
“ perish for thirst, and were praying to God for it.” The truth of this fact is avouched by *Tertullian* †, who lived near that time, and from him and *Apollinarius*, is recorded by *Eusebius* in his history ‡, and in his *Chronicon* ||. The substance of the story is also owned by the heathen Historians, as *Julius Capitolinus* **, *Lampridius* ††, and *Xiphiline* ‡‡, who wrote the lives of the *Roman* Emperors about that time; tho’ out of spite to the Christians they ascribe it to *Jupiter Pluvius*, or to the Emperor’s own prayers. *Claudian* also sings of it, as may be seen by his own words at the foot of the

Z 4

page.

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 5.

† Apologeticus, cap. 5. *Marcus quoque Aurelius in Germanica Expeditione, Christianorum militum orationibus ad Deum factis, imbres in siti illa impetravit.* Ad Scapulam cap. 4. operum pag. m. 92.

‡ Euseb. loco citato.

|| Chronicon ad Annum Dom. 178. Fol. 78.

** Capitolinus in M. Antonino, pag. m. 158.

†† Lampridius in Heliogabalo, pag. 198.

‡‡ Xiphilin. Epit. Dionis in Marco.

page *. Mr *Addison*, late Secretary of State, in his *Travels* through *Italy*, informs us †, That upon *Antoninus's* Pillar is to be seen at this day the figure of *Jupiter Pluvius*, sending down rain on the fainting army of *Marcus Aurelius*, and thunder-bolts on his enemies; which is a very great confirmation of the story of the *Thundring Legion* κεραυνοβόλου, so *Eusebius* calls it ‡, and a standing evidence of the truth, even some way greater than the testimony of an ancient author. The same honourable and learned person tells us, *I have seen*, says he, *a medal, which relates to the same affair, where the Emperor is called Germanicus, and carries on the reverse a thunder-bolt in his hand.* The learned *Hermannus Witsius* has wrote a treatise to confirm the truth of the matter ||. What I have already advanced, may prove the truth of the fact to any unprejudiced person. We cannot expect that the Heathens will speak too plainly upon a subject that tends to commend Christianity. And I cannot see that a Christian who believes that *Elijah* prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and that God hears the prayers of his people, should doubt but that this God might signally hear the prayers of a whole legion of Christians, when this might tend to his own glory, to the conviction of his enemies, and to the good of his Church. Upon this happy event the Emperor wrote to the Senate, acknowledging this great blessing, and commanding all just favour to be shewn to the Christians. That the Emperor wrote such letters is evident, since *Tertullian*, who wrote but about thirty years after that time quotes them, and appeals to them, as in his words at the foot of the page,

* Claud. in sextum Conf. Honorii, ver. 340. & seqq.

Clemens, Marce, redis——

Laus ibi nulla ducum: nam flammeus imber in hostem

Decidit: ——

Tunc contenta polo mortalis nescia teli

Pugna fuit——

+ Addison's *Travels*, pag. 357, & seqq.

‡ Euseb. Hist. loco citato.

|| Diatribe de legione fulminatrice.

page *, which he would never have done, if the fact had not been unquestionable, and known to the *Romans* at that time: and it appears by *Eusebius* †, that the good effects of this indulgence continued even to the time of the Emperor *Commodus*; tho' at the same time I frankly own, that the stress of the whole affair is not to be laid upon the Emperor *Marc Antonine's* Letters extant at this day, at the end of *Justin Martyr's* second Apology ‡, which tho' they should be interpolated, yet it appears from *Tertullian* and *Eusebius*, that this Emperor did give orders to the Senate, allowing the Christians to live, forbidding to accuse them; and that those who libelled them only for being Christians, should be punished by death, even to be burnt alive.

The Christians enjoyed a considerable time of tranquillity and peace under the reigns of the Emperors *Commodus*, *Ælius Pertinax* and *Julian*, that is, for the space of about 15 years, from *Anno Dom. vulg.* 180 to 195, in which time the Christian Religion made great progress. For, as *Eusebius* informs us ||, *The doctrine of salvation did then prevail with all sorts of men to worship the only true God: Even at Rome those who were of the first rank for riches and honours, with their whole families, joined themselves to the Church, to obtain salvation to their souls.*

In the year 195, *Severus*, an *African*, got into the throne. He was a Prince witty and learned, prudent and politic, hardy and valiant; tho' at the same time crafty and subtle, treacherous and unfaithful, bloody and passionate, as his own historian observes **; his nature truly answering his name, *vere Pertinax, vere Severus*, that is, *truly obstinate and cruel*. He put to death many

* Apologeticus, cap. 15. operum pag. 23. *At nos edimus protectorem, si literæ M. Aurelii Imperatoris gravissimi requirantur, quibus illam Germanicam sitim Christianorum forte militum precationibus, impetrato imbri, discussam contestatur, qui sicut palam ab ejusmodi hominibus pœnam dimovit, ita alio modo palam dispersit, adjecta etiam accusatoribus damnatione & quidem tetriciore.*

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 21.

‡ Operum pag. 101, 102. Edit. Colon. 1686. Fol.

|| Hist. lib. 5. cap. 21.

** Spartiani Severus, in vitis Cæsarum, pag. m. 184.

many of the *Roman* Senators. Under him began the *sixth Persecution* ; for tho' at first he shewed himself favourable to the Christians, yet afterward he changed his mind, and gave ear to those who traduced them as an infamous generation, a people that designed nothing but rebellion and treason against the state. Whereupon he not only suffered his ministers and governours of provinces to treat them with all imaginable cruelty, but also he himself gave out edicts, forbidding any, under the most terrible penalties, to profess either the *Jewish* or Christian Religion, as is mentioned even by *Spartian* a heathen *, which was executed with that rigour and inhumanity, that the Christians in those days verily believed that the time of Antichrist did then take place. The martyrs of note whom this persecution sent to heaven, were *Victor* Bishop of *Rome*, *Leonidas* the father of *Origen*, beheaded at *Alexandria* †, *Serenus*, *Heracles*, *Heron*, another *Serenus*, *Plutarchus*, all *Origen's* scholars, and *Rhais* a Catechumen : She also, says *Origen* ‡, received baptism by fire. *Potamiana*, an illustrious virgin, and her mother *Marcella*, after various torments were committed to the flames, and *Basilides* one of the officers who led them to the execution. *Irenæus* Bishop of *Lyons*, being prepared by several torments, was at length put to death. 'Tis not easy to assign the certain date of his martyrdom, the record thereof being lost, but probably it was about the year of our Lord 202 ||, before *Severus's* expedition into *Britain*, when he took *Lyons* in his way, that he might see the execution done with his own eyes. And indeed the vast numbers who are said to have suffered there, agree well enough with the fierce and cruel temper of that Prince, who had conceived a particular displeasure against those citizens, and a worse against the Christians. Tho' many of these martyrs are unknown to us, yet *their names are honourably writ in the lamb's book of life*.

Having

* Spartiani Severus in vitis Cæsarum, pag. m. 184. *Judeos fieri sub gravi pœna vetuit, idem de Christianis sanxit.*

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 1.

‡ Apud Euseb. in Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 4. vide etiam cap. 5.

|| Dr. Cave's Life of Irenæus, pag. 164.

Having thus given an account of the persecutions the Christian Church endured by the heathen powers, in the first and second centuries, that which we have last named dipping a few years into the third; before I proceed to the rest of the persecutions, I shall observe a few things relating to the Heathens that were uneasy to the Christians, beside what they endured by persecuting Emperors.

The Governours of the provinces, who before the time of *Constantine* the Great were all Heathens, from an inveterate hatred to the Christian Name, did sometimes persecute before they received any new orders from the Emperor reigning, and without any new law, only of their own accord executing those which had been in force under the preceding Emperors. This seems to have been the case in the reign of *Antoninus Pius*. Oftentimes also the prefects and deputies stretched their orders to the utmost, and the enraged Pagan populace imputed all the calamities which came upon them as a just judgment for their sins, to the Christians, and therefore hurried them to most cruel deaths.

In the first century, about the time of the Emperor *Domitian*, there appeared a grand impostor, called *Apollonius Tyanæus*: he was born at *Tyana*, a city of *Cappadocia*, and died in the reign of the Emperor *Cocceius Nerva*. His life was writ by *Philostratus* in the third century 100 years and more after his Hero was dead. This book is still extant, and translated into several languages. *Hierocles* a heathen philosopher, in the reign of *Diocletian*, wrote against the Christians a book he called *Philalethes*; where, to render our religion ridiculous, he compares this *Apollonius* with our Lord Jesus Christ, asserting, that as the one did miracles, so did the other; as the one ascended to heaven, so did the other. *Eusebius* Bishop of *Cæsarea* solidly answered this book of *Hierocles*, where he shews that *Apollonius* is so far from deserving to be compared with Christ, that he ought not to be called a philosopher, nor a good man; and that *Philostratus*, who wrote the history of his life, is an author that deserves no credit,

credit, who contradicts himself at every turn, who doubts of the miracles which he himself reports, and tells many things which are manifest fables. Concerning this *Apollonius* and his Historian, I shall further remark, *First*, That *Philostratus*, when he writes the history of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, more than 100 years after he was dead, without any memoirs, helps or records, to vouch his narrative, deserves no credit. At best he could only have his relations from a second or third hand, there being no eye-witnesses that transmitted them to his time. As to *Damis*, the companion of *Apollonius*, he was a partner with him in the imposture, but wrote nothing that ever was heard of. The history of the Gospel was writ by those who were eye-witnesses to Christ and his miracles, in the same age wherein it was acted. But as to this *Apollonius*, not only Christian Writers, but even the very best Heathen authors and historians, who lived about that time, and long before *Philostratus*, as *Tacitus*, *Sueton*, *Pliny*, *Plutarch*, *Dion Cassius*, *Celsus* and others, are silent concerning him. This story advanced by *Philostratus* appears then as a fable concerning things which nobody heard or saw but himself. *2dly*, The great motive that seems to have induced *Philostratus* to write this idle story, was to compliment *Caracalla* and *Julia*, who were so fond of sophists and magicians, that their court was full of them. *3dly*, That whole book of *Philostratus* is full of ridiculous fables, even in matters of fact, which no wise man ever believed; as, *That the river Euphrates runs a great way under ground, and appears again in Egypt, where 'tis joined with the river Nilus**: *That in India there are women black like Æthiopians in the upper part of their body, from the head to the breast, and all the rest of their body white*†: *That in India they have a black hog's head full of water, and another full of wind; when they want rain, they open the one, and the clouds pour down rain; and when they want wind, they open the other, and the wind blows, and drives away the rain*‡. The whole

* *Philostratus de vita Apollonii Tyanæi*, lib. 1. cap. 11.

† *Philostratus de vita Apollonii Tyanæi*, lib. 3. cap. 1.

‡ *Ibid.* lib. 3. cap. 3.

whole story he tells of the *Brachmans* and *Indians* smells rank of the fable. Who can believe that *Apollonius* understood the talk of birds, and foretold many things by it? and also by the intrails of a lion*? He frequently asserts the *Metempsychosis*, or transmigration of the souls of men into beasts, of which therefore he would not eat. Who can credit that he understood all languages? That he taught himself all his extraordinary knowledge? That he knew the thoughts of the heart? That he foretold things to come? That he loosed his own chains? That he cast out devils, drove away the pestilence when it was raging at *Ephesus*, healed the sick, raised the dead, and a great many of the like things, which *Philostatus* ascribes to him? The very errors of that book in history and geography, may amuse children who are not acquainted with these matters, but will never satisfy a man of sense and learning, but rather convince him that the author was a cheat. In short, *Apollonius* was an impostor, whom the Heathens trumped up to rival the glory of Christ and his Apostles; or at best, he was a cunning magician and necromancer. *Philostatus* owns he was accounted so by the *Magicians* at *Babylon* †, and by the *Indian Brachmans*, and *Gymnosophists* in *Egypt*; that he was incarcerated for magic by *Domitian*; that he studied with the magicians at *Babylon* ‡, and acknowledged the *Brachmans* in *India* as his masters||; and that he sacrificed to the heathen deities, to the sun, and to *Jupiter*. *Lucian* in his *Pseudomantis* tells of one *Alexander*, who knew the tricks of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, and his whole tragedy. But I think we have enough of him. 'Tis a token that the heathens and infidels in these times durst not deny the truth of the miracles done by our Redeemer and his Apostles, the light of them being writ as with sun-beams, and so glaring, that every one might be convinced by it; but through the cunning of the enemy of mankind, they counterfeit an imposture to deceive the simple. He that desires to know more of him

may

* Ibid. lib. 1. cap. 13.

† Philostatus ut supra, lib. 1. cap. 1, 2.

‡ Ibid. lib. 7. cap. 15, 17.

|| Ibid. lib. 8.

may consult *Eusebius* against *Hierocles*, *Huetius**, and *Spanhemius*†; and after all I humbly conceive the very reading of *Philostratus*'s life of *Apollonius*, may convince any wise man of the imposture.

Besides this counterfeit, who by some few authors that name him, is said to have acted his tricks through the world, from the reign of *Nero* to that of *Nerva*, (*i. e.* near 50 years, tho' the facts are not well attested, as is already said) there were in these times some eminent Heathen Philosophers, who did all the prejudice they could to Christianity; and therefore I shall notice some of them who were more remarkable: as *Peregrinus* a *Cynic*, or, as *Lucian* || calls him, a *Stoic Philosopher*. He flourish'd in the time of the Emperor *Trajan*, and died in that of *Marcus Aurelius*, or *Commodus*. *Aulus Gellius* says ‡, he was surnamed *Proteus*, that is, changeable, and with the same breath calls him, *Virum constantem & gravem*, a grave and constant man. 'Tis not easy to reconcile these characters: perhaps *Gellius* thought the surname of *Proteus* unjustly given to his friend. *Lucian* says, that *Peregrinus* once professed himself a Christian, and was cast into prison, where he had large collections given him by charitable people; but he easily made his escape, and returned to his own city *Parium* on the *Hellepont*: Being ejected by the Church, he abandon'd the profession of Christianity, and returned to Paganism. *He went out from us, but he was not of us*. At the Olympic Games he, in view of all *Greece*, cast himself into a pile of fire he had made, where he died, and some body gave a talent for the staff he laid aside when he destroyed himself. *Athenagoras*** and *Tertullian*†† speak of his death, all agreeing concerning it, and *Ammianus Marcellinus* ||| who calls him a famous Philosopher.

Crescens,

* Demonst. Evang. Prop. 9. cap. 147. in Fol. pag. 650, — 655.

† Hist. Christiana, §. 1. col. 593, 594. || De morte Peregrini, operum Tom. 2. pag. 558, & seqq. ‡ Noctes Atticæ, lib. 12, cap. 11.

** Legat. †† Exhor. ad Martyras, oper. pag. 137.

||| Lib. 29. pag. m. 646.

Crescens, a Cynic Philosopher, was a declared enemy to our religion; he was a man of an impure life, and a great promoter of the Persecutions against the Christians, in the reigns of *Antoninus* and *M. Aurelius*. *Tatian the Assyrian* says of him *, *Crescens who dwelt at Megalopolis, did exceed all men παιδεραστία, in the infamous love of boys, and was most covetous of money. He persuaded others to contemn death, and yet thought it an evil thing himself; and therefore would have me and Justin put to death, as the greatest evil he could do us, because he (that is, Justin) in preaching the truth had accused the philosophers as voluptuous impostors. Justin Martyr* had many debates with this man, and he says of him †, *I expect that by some of these nominal pretenders to wisdom I shall be ensnared, taken and affixed to the Cross, even by Crescens φιλοσόφου καὶ φιλοχόμπου, that vain-glorious philosopher; but I cannot call such a man worthy of the name of a philosopher, who speaks publickly of those things he understands not, who calls the Christians Atheists, and ungodly men, to ingratiate himself with those whom he has led into error. Crescens had spoke so much unjustly to the prejudice of the Christians, that Justin Martyr found himself obliged to wipe off these calumnies and vindicate them in his second apology; and this vain-glorious philosopher was never at rest, till Justin had obtain'd a crown of martyrdom. Eusebius repeats these passages || concerning Crescens, and speaks of him to the same purpose.*

Lucian of Samosata was another declared enemy to the Christians. I have frequently in this work had occasion to cite this author; he was an *Epicurean*, if we believe *Suidas*, but *Lucian* himself in his *Pseudomantis* says ‡, that he came out of the school of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, where he learned his tricks, and even the love of Boys, or Sodomy. Some authors place him in the time of *Trajan*, others, as *Spanheim* |||, in the time of the Emperors *Aurelius* and *Commodus*. He mocks at Heathenism, as
in

* Orat. contra Græcos, pag. 157. † Apologia 1. operum pag. 46, 47.

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 16. ‡ Operum Luciani, Tom. 1. pag. 746.

||| Hist. Christiana, col. 69

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in his *Philosopseudes*, at Christianity in his discourse *de morte Peregrini*, and in a manner derides all religion, and sets up for an Atheist in his *Jupiter Tragædus* *. And yet amidst all his satyrs against the Christians, he has some grains of truth. *These wretches*, says he †, *believe themselves immortal, that they shall live for ever; and therefore despise death, and yield themselves to it. Their Lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brethren; and therefore when they depart from us, and deny the deities of the Greeks, and worship their crucified teacher, and frame their lives conformable to his laws, they contemn riches, have all things common, and keep their faith; and when any cunning man joins them, he soon grows rich.— To this day they worship that great man μέγαν ἄνθρωπον crucified in Palestine. Peregrinus learned that wonderful wisdom of the Christians. Suidas says, Lucian was torn in pieces by dogs. If it be so, it was a just judgment against him, who, as a black-mouth'd cur, barked at all religion.*

Celsus the Epicurean was another great enemy to Christianity. He lived a little before *Origen*, or was for some time his con-temporary; for he flourished under *Hadrian* ‖. *Lucian* dedicates his *Pseudomantis* to him. He was well instructed in all kind of learning, which he made a bad use of to oppose the Scriptures, and the Christian Religion, in his book he called Ἀληθινόλογον, which is now lost, except so much of it as is repeated by *Origen*, who gave a solid answer to it in eight books, which not only refute *Celsus*, but may also answer the objections of *Libertines* and *Deists* against the holy Scriptures to this very day.

It seems not far out of our road also to observe that in the second century were many learned men, and eminent writers among the Heathens, as *Frontinus*, who then wrote his *Stratagemata*; *Cornelius Tacitus*, a Prætor and Consul, who wrote his annals and history, a good part whereof yet remains; *Pliny the younger*, a consul, his

* Tom. 2. pag. 127. † De Morte Peregrini, operum Tom. 2. pag. 565, 567. ‖ *Origen contra Celsum*, lib. 1. cap. 8.

his Epistles and Panegyric are yet among our hands; *Plutarch*, commonly esteemed *Trajan's Præceptor*, his *Lives* and *Morals* are yet extant, and are books very useful in their own kind. Under the Emperor *Hadrian*, *Pblegon* a mathematician wrote on the Olympiads sixteen books, which are now lost. He recorded the darkness at Christ's Crucifixion, of which formerly. *Favorinus* a Sophist. *Epiætetus*, a Stoic Philosopher, wrote his *Enchiridion* or Moral Precepts. *Arrianus* an admirer of *Epiætetus*, an historian, of whom we have remaining seven books of *Alexander* the Great's expedition, and the *Periplus* of the *Euxin* and *Red-sea*. *Philo Biblius* is mentioned by *Eusebius*, and is said to have translated *Sanchoiathon's Phœnician* history; of which we had occasion to discourse more fully in the first and second chapters of this book. Only here I remark, that if *Sanchoiathon* wrote such a history, 'tis strange that *Justin Martyr*, *Theophilus Antiochenus*, *Tatian*, *Athenagoras*, *Clemens of Alexandria*, nor *Tertullian*, all very learned and inquisitive men, who lived and wrote about that time, when *Philo Biblius* is said to have translated him, speak never one word of him. About the same time flourished *Florus*, who wrote a compend of the *Roman* history, and *C. Suetonius Tranquillus*, whose *Lives* of the twelve *Cæsars* yet remains. Under *Antoninus Pius*, flourished *Galen*, a famous Physician; *Justin*, who compendized *Trogus Pompeius*; *Appianus*, an eminent Historian, but most of his books are now lost; and *Diogenes Laertius*, whose ten books of the *Lives* of Philosophers yet remain. Under *M. Antoninus* and *Lucius Verus* flourished *Claudius Ptolemæus*, famous for his *Astronomy* and *Geography*; *Sextus Empiricus*, of the sect of the *Pyrronists*; *Numenius*, a *Platonic*, who called *Plato*, *Moses* atticizing or speaking *Greek*; *Apuleius*, accused of magic; *Pausanias*, who wrote ten books of the antiquities of *Greece*; and *Aulus Gellius*, the author of *Noctes Atticæ*. Finally, under *Commodus* flourished *Julius Pollux*, who wrote the *Onomasticon*; and *Athencæus*, who wrote 15 books of *Deipnosophists*. Besides many famous *Roman* lawyers, which I do not insist upon. We have sometimes in this work remarked a few

passages from these authors concerning the Christians: But 'tis no wonder that these Heathens speak so little of them, since these were men full of self-conceit, despising others who were not of their opinion, and especially the Christians whom they mortally hated.

To return to the Propagation of Christianity and State of the Church under the Heathen Emperors: *Septimius Severus*, the author of the sixth Persecution, having died in *Britain*, his son *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Bassianus Caracalla* succeeded in the Empire in the year of our Lord 211. He was a cruel prince; he killed his own brother *Geta*, and after his death consecrated him as a Deity, saying, *Sit divus, dum non sit vivus*, Let him be a Saint, since he is not alive*. He married his father's widow *Julia*; he consulted with none but magicians and astrologers. He put to death *Papinianus* the lawyer, because he would not defend his parricide, and also his brother's servants, and many other illustrious persons at *Rome*. He filled the town of *Alexandria* with the blood of its inhabitants, and was void of humanity to his subjects, and fidelity to his allies. So many cruelties hastned his death; his own officers conspired against him, and a captain called *Martian* killed him by the order of *Macrinus*, after he had reigned six years, two months, and two days.

Marcus Opilius Severus Macrinus was saluted Emperor in the year of our Lord 217; he was of a mean birth, and fortune raised him by degrees. He made his son *Diadumenus*, aged not above nine or ten years, partaker of the Empire. His cruelty made him odious to his soldiers, and therefore the same who set him upon the throne pulled him down by a violent death, after he had reigned one year two months.

Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Heliogabalus, so called because he was Priest of the Sun before his election: He was son to *Caracalla* and *Semiamira*, and chosen Emperor by the army in the room of *Macrinus*. He carried his own

* Lampridius in *Geta*.

own God with him to *Rome*, forbidding the worship of any other. He built him a temple, and continued priest himself, commanding the vestal fire, the *Palladium* and consecrated bucklers to be carried thither. He said *the religion of the Jews and Samaritans, and the devotion of the Christians, ought also to be brought there, that the secret priesthood of Heliogabalus might maintain all kind of worship* *. He was a Prince so abominably vicious, that he was called the *Roman Sardanapalus*. His luxury was boundless. When near the sea, he would eat nothing but fowls from the remotest mountains; and when farthest from the sea, would eat nothing but sea-fish. He fed his lamps with balsam, and filled his fish-ponds with sweet-scented water. He was lavish of his treasure. He was a monster for all kinds of debauchery; as may be seen in *Lampridius*, and others who from him have written his life. He having designed to cut off *Alexander* the son of *Mammæa*, whom the senate had declared *Cæsar*, and being hateful even to his own guard, he and his mother were both slain in the camp, and their corps, after a thousand indignities, thrown into the *Tiber*, after a reign of three years, nine months and four days. These three Emperors last named, tho' very vicious Princes, so as *Lampridius*, a Heathen, calls them † *Judgments against the Romans*, yet none of them were tainted with persecuting the Christians.

After *Heliogabalus's* death, *Alexander Severus* was declared Emperor, in the year of our Lord 222. He governed 13 years: he was a calm, wise, mild and learned Prince, one of the best of the Heathen Emperors. He acted much by the advice of his mother *Mammæa*, and they were both treacherously murdered at the same time, by the order of *Maximinus* his successor. His historian, *Ælius Lampridius*, has the following passages that concern our Religion, and seem to deserve room here. He says ||, *This Emperor in his private chappel* [Larario,]

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* *Lampridius in Heliogabalo, pag. m. 197.*† *In Heliogabalo, non longe ab initio.*|| *Lampridii Alexander Severus passim, mihi a pag. 222, ad 229.*

to which he resorted almost every morning for his devotion; had the images of some deified princes and holy persons, and among them Apollonius; and, as a writer of these times says, Christ, Abraham, Orpheus, and these sort of Gods. A strange mixture! He reserved to the Jews their privileges, and permitted the Christians to live quietly.—— He went up to the capitol every seventh day when he was in town, and frequented the temples. He desired a temple should be built to Christ, and that he should be received among the Gods, which Hadrian is said to have designed, who ordered temples to be built in all cities without images; and therefore those temples where there are no Gods, are to this day called Hadrian's, being such as he ordered. But he was forbid to do this by those who consulted the sacred books, who found, that if that happened to be done, all men would become Christians.—— He made a publick edict, when he was to appoint governors of provinces, exhorting the people, if they had any crime to accuse them of, they might prove the same under pain of death: For he said it was reasonable, that when the Christians and Jews did this in their preaching priests, who were to be ordained, that as great care should be had in electing governours of provinces, who had the trust of men's lives and estates.—— When the Christians had possessed themselves of a public place, which the cooks or victuallers claimed as belonging to them, the Emperor gave this opinion, That it was better God should be worshipped there at any rate, than that it should be given to the cooks.—— He used oft these words, which he had heard from the Jews or Christians, Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; which he caused to be proclaimed by a crier, and was so much in love with it, that he would have it inscribed on his public buildings. From what we have advanced concerning this Emperor, it seems probable that Christianity had made such progress over the world at that time, the precepts thereof were counted so excellent, and the conversation of its professors so pure and unblameable, that this virtuous and learned Prince had drunk in some of its principles, and had a favourable opinion of our religion; tho' he was not so far engaged
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as to become a Christian, nor to renounce the practice of Pagan Idolatry.

The Church had now enjoyed a considerable time of peace, for the space of 27 years, or thereabouts, after the death of *Septimius Severus*. The next who created disturbance to the Christians was *Maximinus*, a man of base and obscure original, of a mean and fordid education. He had been first a shepherd, then a high-way-man, and last of all a soldier. He was of strength and stature beyond the ordinary size, and his manners as robust and boisterous as his constitution, every way suitable to the rudeness of his education. *Never did a more cruel beast, says his historian*, tread upon the earth, relying altogether upon his strength, and upon that account reckoning himself almost immortal, he spared none, but especially killed all that knew any thing of his mean descent, that none might reproach him with the obscurity of his birth. Without judging, accusation, information or defence, he killed every body and seized their goods, having put to death 4000 persons; yet his cruelty could not be satisfied.* He having slain his master *Alexander Severus*, that excellent Prince, of whom we have just now discoursed, usurped the government, and managed it suitably to his cruelty.

The seventh persecution was raised by him. Indeed *Sulpitius Severus* † admits not this into the number, and therefore makes no more but nine heathen persecutions. Yet he says, *Maximinus vexed the clergy belonging unto the Churches.* But *Eusebius* expressly affirms, “ That
“ *Maximinus* stirred up a persecution against the Chri-
“ stians ‡, and that out of hatred to *Alexander* his Pre-
“ decessor, in whose family many believers found enter-
“ tainment; and commanded the presidents of the
“ Churches, as the principal authors of the evangelical
“ doctrine, to be put to death.” This persecution is placed *A.D. 237.* *Firmilian* Bishop of *Cappadocia*, in his letter to *Cyprian*, says, “ It was not a general but a
“ local persecution, that raged in some particular
A a 3 “ places

* *Julius Capitolinus* in *Maximinis*, pag. m. 236.

† *Sacræ Historiæ* lib. 2.

‡ *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 6. cap. 28.

“ places *, and especially in that province where he lived, *Serenianus* the Roman President driving the Christians out of all these countries.” He adds, “ That many dreadful earthquakes happening in these parts, whereby towns and cities were swallowed up, gave new life and vigour to the persecution ; it being usual with the Gentiles, if a famine, pestilence, earthquake, or inundation happened, to charge all upon the Christians, and to fall foul on them.” *Pontian* Bishop of *Rome* (being before banished to *Sardinia*) and *Anteros* his successor, did at that time both suffer martyrdom †. *Ambrosius*, who was converted by *Origen* from the errors of *Valentinus*, and *Marcion*, a rich man, and also of great parts and learning, was then a noble confessor ‡. *Origen* wrote his book *de martyrio*, for the comfort of those who suffered in this evil time. But this being lost, the names of most of those who then suffered are buried in oblivion.

After *Maximinus* reigned *Balbinus* and *Pupienus*: to them succeeded the *Gordians*, and to them *Philippus Arabs*, at which time, for about 12 years space, the Church enjoyed some mixture of calmness and tranquillity. *Eusebius* says ||, ‘*Tis reported, ὡς κατεχει λόγος, that Philip was a Christian*; and *Jerom*, in the translation he has made of *Eusebius’s* *Chronicon*, says more positively **, *That Philip was the first of all the Roman Emperors who became a Christian*. And after him a whole troop of historians and chronologers have asserted the same. The learned *Spanhemius* has at great length and with great learning examined this point both in his ecclesiastic history ††, and in a separate dissertation ‡‡, and has found, that *this Philip was no Christian*. That which satisfies me to go into his opinion, is, that the heathen historians are silent about this Emperor’s embracing our religion ; that the ecclesiastic historians all declare, *That Constantine*

* *Spanhemii* F.F. *Hist. Christiana*, col. 761.

† *Inter Epistolas Cypriani*, No. 75.

‡ *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 18, 19.*

|| *Ibid. lib. 6. cap. 34.*

** *Ad Annum Dom. 247.*

†† *Sæc. 3. col. 699, & seqq.* ‡‡ *Operum Tom. 2. col. 405, ad 436.*

time *the Great* was the first Christian Emperor; that *Philip* was not like the primitive Christians in his morals: he was an *Arabian* robber, when he was made captain of the *Prætorian* bands, who then made and cut off Emperors as they pleased. He most treacherously and barbarously assassinated his master *Gordian* the younger, a hopeful Prince, as all the *Roman* Historians declare, and usurped the empire *, and did not act becoming a Christian in his reign. Returning from the *Persian* War, he celebrated the great secular games, in the thousandth year after *Rome* was built, with all the impiety, obscenity and vanity which any Heathen ever used: which practices Christians in these times perfectly abhorred †. *Spanheim* also produces coins and medals struck by *Philip's* order, which a Christian Prince would never have allowed, since they bear all the marks of idolatry. Those who are curious, may see more fully what that learned author has wrote on that subject. Mean time I leave *Philip*, and proceed to

Decius. He having mounted the imperial throne, proved a good commander of an army and a prudent governour, but an implacable enemy to the Christians, against whom he raised the *eighth Persecution*, Anno Dom. 250, which proved, tho' among the shortest, (for it continued not two years) yet the hottest of any that had hitherto oppressed the Church. This may be ascribed to the Emperor's zeal for declining Heathenism, which he saw fatally undermined by Christianity, and that there was no support for the one, but by the ruin of the other. *Decius* reigned scarce two years, being pursued by the *Goths*, who ravaged the provinces of *Mæsia* and *Thracia*; he drowned himself in a marsh, where his body was never found ‡. During his time the storm was very black and violent, no place remained but what did feel the dreadful effects thereof. The Christians were every where driven from

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* Eutrop. lib. 9. Aur. Victor in Philippo. Jul. Capitolinus Gordiani tres, pag. m. 250. Philippus impiè non jure obtinuit imperium.

† Tertul. de Spectaculis, de Idololatria.

‡ Aur. Victoris Epirome in Decio.

their houses, spoiled of their estates, and tormented in their bodies. Whips and prisons, fire and wild beasts, scalding pitch and melted wax, sharp stakes and burning pincers, were but some of the methods of their treatment. When the old ones were run over, new were daily contrived. The laws of nature and humanity were broken down, friend betrayed friend, and the nearest relation, his own father and brother. Every one was ambitious to promote the imperial edicts, and thought it meritorious to bring a Christian to the stake. *Alexander* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, an aged venerable man, who had governed his Church many years, was carried to *Cæsarea*, and after a bold confession of his faith, was cast into prison, where he died *. *Babylas* Bishop of *Antioch*, also died in prison.

Dionysius of *Alexandria* says †, “ That there they fell
 “ upon a Presbyter, called *Metra*, whom they would have
 “ forced to blaspheme Christ. When he refused to do
 “ it, they laid upon him with staves and clubs; with
 “ sharp reeds, pricked his face and eyes, and then stoned
 “ him to death. They apprehended a holy woman, cal-
 “ led *Quinta*, and endeavoured to compel her to worship
 “ in an idol-temple; which she refusing, the persecu-
 “ tors bound her feet, and dragged her through the
 “ street on hard stones, whipt her, dashed her against
 “ mill-stones, and stoned her to death. The enraged mob
 “ broke into the Christians houses, plundered their
 “ goods, and burnt them in the market-place. The
 “ saints took joyfully this spoiling, knowing that in hea-
 “ ven they had a more enduring substance. Neither
 “ know I any save one, says he, of all they seized, to
 “ this very day, who denied our Lord. They took an
 “ ancient virgin called *Apollonia*, whom they brought
 “ forth, and dashing all the teeth out of her head, they
 “ made a great fire, threatening to cast her into it, un-
 “ less she would speak such blasphemous words as they
 “ bade her. She, after a little pause, leapt into the fire,
 “ and was burned. Then they apprehended *Serapion*

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* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 39.

† Apud eund. lib. 6. cap. 41.

“ in his house, whom they treated with the most bitter
 “ torments, broke all the joints of his body, and
 “ throwing him from a high loft killed him. The poor
 “ Christians could no where shelter themselves, nor rest
 “ day nor night, the multitudes crying out, *That un-*
 “ *less they would blaspheme Christ, they should all be burn-*
 “ *ed.* But sedition and intestine war troubled our per-
 “ secutors, and we got a little breathing. Soon after
 “ came out cruel edicts, which made some stagger. O-
 “ thers more strong in the faith valiantly endured perse-
 “ cution, and obtained martyrdom: As *Julian*, a man
 “ diseased with the gout, and not able to stand, and
 “ *Cronion*, who were laid upon Camels, scourged, and
 “ at last thrown into the fire, where with great constancy
 “ they suffered death in the view of the multitude. As
 “ *Julian* went to his martyrdom, a soldier standing by
 “ checked those who abused the sufferer with reproach-
 “ ful words; whereupon a cry being raised against him,
 “ he is presently apprehended, and being found a stedfast
 “ soldier of Christ, was beheaded.” It might detain us
 too long to give the detail of the sufferings of the rest
 who were crowned with martyrdom; as, *Epimachus*,
Alexander, *Ammon*, *Zeno*, *Ptolemy*, *Ammonaria*, *Mer-*
curia, *Isidore*, and *Dioscorus*, a boy of fifteen years of
 age, and many others who willingly declared themselves
 to be Christians before the heathen tribunals, and that
 they were ready to seal their testimony with their blood;
 which frightened the judges, and made the cause of Christ
 to triumph, as is mentioned by the same *Dionysius* *.

Among others *Ischyron*, a servant to a nobleman, was
 commanded by his master to sacrifice to idols; which
 when he refused, and would by no means be persuaded
 to do, his master run him through with a pike †. At
 the same time *Fabian* Bishop of *Rome*, and many at *Car-*
thage, *Ephesus*, and other places, overcame by the blood
 of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and loved
 not their lives to the death. *Nicephorus* affirms, 'Tis easier
 to count the sands of the shore, than to reckon up all the
 martyrs

* Loco citato.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 42.

martyrs who suffered in that persecution ||. Besides a great number of confessors, who were beaten, imprisoned, tormented, and many more who betook themselves to a voluntary exile, chusing rather to commit themselves to barren rocks and mountains, or to the mercy of wild beasts, than to such persecutors who had put off all reason and humanity. Among them was *Paul of Thebais*, a youth of fifteen years of age, who withdrew himself into the *Egyptian* Desarts, where finding a large and convenient cavern in a rock, which formerly had been a private mint-house in the time of *Antony* and *Cleopatra*, he took up his residence there, and led a solitary and anchoretic life, and became father of the hermits. In this religious retirement he continued till he was above one hundred years of age. In the last period of his life he was visited by *Antonius*, who had spent the greatest part of ninety years in these desarts, and performed the last office to *Paul*, by committing his dead body to the grave. Of these ancient hermits abundance of authors may be seen, as at the foot of the page*.

Gallus succeeded *Decius*, as in his government, so in his enmity to the Christians, carrying on what the other had begun. But the cloud soon blew over: he made an ignominious peace with the *Scythians* or *Goths*, that the *Romans* should pay an annual tribute to these *Barbarians*, which was never heard of before; and therefore his own army turned him off, and put him and his son to death†. By some authors, he is not numbred in the series of the *Roman* Emperors. He was succeeded by

Valerian, who entred upon the empire with universal applause. In the beginning of his reign he was a patron to the Christians; he treated them with all offices of kindness and humanity, entertaining them in his own family, so as his court seemed a little Church for piety, a sanctuary

|| Nicephori Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 29.

* Sozomen Hist. lib. 1. cap. 13. Ruffin. Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 8. Athanasius in vita Ant. Hieronymi, Catalogus in Antonio. Polydor. Virgil. de inventoribus, lib. 7. cap. 1. Spanhem, Hist. Christiana, col. 802.

† Pomponii Lati Gallus.

sanctuary and refuge for good men *. But alas ! this pleasant scene soon vanished, the Emperor was seduced by a magician of *Egypt* called *Macrinus*, who persuaded him, *That the only way to prosper in his affairs, was to restore the Gentile Rites, and to suppress Christianity, so hateful to the Gods.* He then commenced the *Ninth Persecution*, which began about the 257th year after our Lord's Birth, and continued three years and a half. *A month was given him to speak blasphemies, and he had power forty and two months †.* *Dionysius* Bishop of *Alexandria*, from whom *Eusebius* takes this, was himself banished to *Cephro*, a barbarous tract of the *Libyan* desert, and probably continued there till the persecution was over. He says ‡, *'Tis not necessary to reckon up the Christians particularly who suffered at this time, since they were many, and unknown to me: only this you may know, that both men and women, young and old, soldiers and country people, persons of all ranks and ages, were some of them scourged and whipt, others beheaded: others overcoming the violence of the flames, received a crown of martyrdom.*—*To this very day the Præses does not cease to kill some, to expose others to torments, and weary others with prisons and chains, ordering that no person see them; and if any enquire for them, that such be apprehended. But God comforts his afflicted, by the cheerful care and diligence of the brethren.* *Cyprian* elegantly and very pathetically bewails the hardships and sufferings which the martyrs did then undergo, in his letter to *Nemesian* and the rest that were condemned to the mines; nor did he himself escape, being beheaded at *Carthage* ||, as *Xistus* and *Quartus* had been before him; and the three hundred martyrs, *de massa candida*, who rather than do sacrifice to the heathen idols, leapt into a mighty pit of burning lime kindled for that purpose, and were stifled in the flames. In *Spain* suffered *Fruetusius*, Bishop of *Terragon*, with his two Deacons; at *Rome*, *Xistus* the Bishop, and *St. Laurence* the Deacon **; at *Cæsarea*, *Priscus*, *Malchus* and *Alexander* ††, who
ashamed

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 7. cap. 9.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. cap. 15.

|| Vide vitam Cypriani per Pontium Diaconum, præmissam Cypriani operibus. ** Cyprian. Epist. 82. †† Euseb. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 12.

ashamed to think they lay idle, while many others were contending for the crown, with one consent went to the judge, and confessed themselves to be Christians, and were cast to the wild beasts to be devoured ; as also a woman in that city, who is said to have been tainted with the heresy of *Marcion*.

Divine Providence, which sometimes in this world pleads the cause of oppressed innocence, did punish this Emperor for his horrible cruelty to those whose interest with heaven, while he was favourable to them, secured his prosperity ; for not only the northern nations did break in upon the empire, but *Valerian* himself was taken prisoner by *Sapor* King of *Persia*, who treated him below the rate of the meanest slave, even used him as his footstool to mount on horse-back * ; and after some years captivity caused him to be flayed alive, and rubbed with salt ; and so put a period to his miserable life. His son *Galienus* growing wiser, by the miscarriages of his father, stopt the persecution, and restored peace and serenity to the Church, as appears by his edict recorded by *Eusebius* †. Notwithstanding all this severity, the number of converts multiplied so prodigiously, that more than one half of the vast *Roman* Empire was by this time become Christian.

Under the reigns of the Emperors *Claudius*, *Tacitus*, *Florianus*, *Probus*, *Carus* and *Numerian*, the Christians enjoyed a long time of peace and prosperity. If we reckon this from the captivity of *Valerian*, in the year of our Lord 260, to the beginning of the *Tenth Persecution*, which I conceive may be placed in the year 302, any body may see that this tranquillity continued near 42 years. Indeed if we look thorough the ten heathenish persecutions from first to last, we may observe, that there were such lucid intervals betwixt them, as gave the Church not only a sweet-breathing time, but also a happy occasion to propagate Christianity over the world. Nor were

* Eutropius & Aurel. Victor. in *Valeriano*. Lactantius de mortibus persecutorum, pag. m. 66. Trebellius Pollio in *Valeriano*.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 7. cap. 13.

were these persecutions, except the *Tenth*, which we are afterward to discourse of, so lasting, nor so universal, as the Church did run the hazard of being ruined by them: yea the courage, constancy and patience of martyrs, with the holy lives and zealous endeavours of the primitive Christians to promote the kingdom of Christ, did very much tend to advance the glory of our Redeemer and the good of the Church, in spite of all the persecutions which the enemy of mankind raised against it. The tranquillity which Christians enjoyed after the captivity of *Valerian*, had somewhat corrupted their manners, and therefore God was pleased to permit a *Tenth Persecution* to purge and winnow away their rubbish and chaff.

This did not commence with the beginning of *Diocletian's* reign: he was declared Emperor *Anno Dom.* 284. and assumed *Maximinus Hercules* for his Colleague, in 286. These two governed the empire for some years; but finding themselves straitned on all hands, by the revolt of their subjects, they made two *Cæsars*, *Constantius Chlorus*, father to *Constantine* the Great, and *Galerius Maximianus*. About this time *Eusebius* informs us *,

“ That the Emperors were so favourable to the Christians, as they made them deputies and governours over whole nations; that they lived in honour at the emperor's court; that they made public profession of their religion; that great numbers of the Heathens embraced Christianity; that there were Churches in all cities; that the assemblies of the Christians were so numerous, that they were forced to pull down the old, and build new and more spacious houses for public worship; that *Dorotheus* and *Gorgonius*, and others who preached the word, were had in honour; that the Bishops were loved and esteemed by the officers and governours of the provinces; the Emperors themselves shewed affection to the Christians; the wives, children and servants of the Emperors were Christians, and the greatest part of the subjects of the empire had abandoned the worship of false Gods to embrace Christianity. This prosperity did daily increase,

“ and

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. cap. 1.

“ and could not be hindred by the arts of the devil or
 “ wicked men, as long as the right hand of the Lord
 “ did protect his people. But alas! *says he*, our affairs,
 “ by too great softness and liberty, did degenerate,
 “ one hating and reproaching another; Bishops con-
 “ tending with Bishops; the people running into fac-
 “ tions, hypocrisy, dissimulation and wickedness did
 “ prevail.—Hence, as the prophet *Jeremiah* speaks,
 “ *How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with*
 “ *a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven to earth*
 “ *the beauty of Israel?* And as the *Psalmist* observes,
 “ *Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou*
 “ *hast profaned his crown, by casting it down to the ground;*
 “ *thou hast broke down all his hedges: all that pass by the*
 “ *way spoil him; he is a reproach to his neighbours.. Thou*
 “ *hast set up the right hand of his adversaries; thou hast*
 “ *made all his enemies to rejoice, &c.”*

The learned M. Du Pin remarks*, “ That the pic-
 “ ture which *Eusebius* draws of the state of the Church,
 “ (*viz.* that just now related) during the first eighteen
 “ years of the reign of *Diocletian*, ’tis thought, rather
 “ represents the East than the West, because the mar-
 “ tyrologies make mention of many martyrs in *Gaul*,
 “ who could not have suffered after the persecution was
 “ declared, since *Gaul* being under the dominion of *Con-*
 “ *stantius Chlorus*, was free from persecution. ’Tis said,
 “ that *Maximianus* coming to *Gaul*, in the year 286,
 “ put to death a whole legion, that was wholly made
 “ up of Christians. ’Tis said, that he immediately sent
 “ *Rictius Varus*, famous in the martyrologies under the
 “ name of *Rictiovarus*, who condemned to death an in-
 “ credible number of Christians in *Gaul*. We likewise
 “ find, that the famous St. *Sebastian* suffered martyrdom
 “ at *Rome* in 285 or 286, and some other martyrs
 “ were put to death in that city before the persecution
 “ was declared.” These things are looked upon as un-
 “ certain or fabulous even by M. Du Pin; and I may
 “ add, that the *Roman* Martyrologies are no sufficient
 “ vouchers, since they advance many legendary stories
 “ concerning the martyrs, without sufficient foundation in

* Abridgment of Church-History, Vol. 2. pag. 78.

antiquity, and which therefore deserve no credit, as we have formerly observed, when speaking of the *First Persecution* by *Nero* *.

This might lead me to make some further enquiry into the story of the *Thebæan Legion*; it is at large narrated by *Eucherius Lugdunensis* †, and from him by *Dr. Cave* ‡. The sum of the whole is, *Maximianus Cæsar* being sent into *Gaul* to repress a rebellion, there he had added to his army a band of Christians called the *Thebæan Legion*, consisting of 6666 resolute soldiers. Coming to *Oëtodurus* in *Savoy*, *Maximianus* commands his army to come together, and under a great penalty, to swear by the altars of the Gods, *That they would unanimously fight against their enemies, and persecute the Christians as enemies to the Gods.* The *Thebæan Legion* understanding this, did unanimously withdraw to *Aganum*, a place eight miles off, called at this day *St. Maurits*, strong with inaccessible rocks. The Emperor missing them, when the rest came to give their oaths, sent officers to command their obedience; to whom the heads of the legion answered, “ That for this end they left *Oëtodurus*, because they
“ heard they should be forced to sacrifice. That being
“ Christians, and that they might not be defiled with
“ the altars of devils, they thought themselves obliged
“ to worship the living God, and to keep that religion,
“ which they had entertained in the East, to the last
“ hour of their life. That as they were a legion, they
“ were ready to do any service in the war; but to return
“ to him, to commit sacrilege, as he commanded, they
“ could not yield.” The Emperor enraged, ordered every tenth man to be put to death, who chearfully offered their necks to the executioners. The only contention among them was, who should first undergo that glorious death. When this was done, the remainder encouraged one another; and still they refused to sacrifice. The exasperated General commands a second decimation, which was immediately executed; and the
remainder

* See pag. 328.

† Apud Surium ad diem 22. Septembris, pag. 220, & seqq.

‡ Primitive Christianity, pag. 431, — 436.

remainder ordered to return to *Ostodurus*: which they still refusing, and he despairing to break their constancy, commands the whole army to fall upon them and cut them off; which they did, and divided the spoil. “ Thus
 “ says *Dr. Cave* *, they died with their swords in their
 “ hands, when they might have preserved their lives in
 “ a place so advantageous, at least sold them at the
 “ dearest rate; which was the most unparalleled instance
 “ of Christian piety and submission that I think was
 “ ever known in the world.”

This story was mightily improved in *Britain* under the reigns of King *Charles* and *James II.* to promote the then beloved doctrine of *Passive Obedience* and *Non-Resistance*. I shall not enter upon the justness of the consequence; this single fact is too narrow a foundation to bear the superstructure of tenets, which are of such importance: But even the matter of fact itself is questioned by very learned critics and historians, *Popish* and *Protestant*, and particularly by *Du Pin*, and *Spanhemius*, not to insist upon others. The former says †, *But it is surprising, that neither Eusebius, nor the author of the book concerning the death of the persecutors, thought to be Lactantius, contemporaries, had no knowledge of so remarkable facts; or that having knowledge of them, they should speak, as they did, of the Church then enjoying a profound peace, and an entire liberty. How can we reconcile that good-will which they say the Emperors had for the Christians, with the unheard of cruelties executed in Gaul by the order of Maximinus, and at Rome by command of Diocletian?* The same author in another part of his works remarks ‡, when discoursing of the works of *Eucherius Lugdunensis*, the supposed father of this story, *That the history of the passion of St. Maurits, and the other Thebean martyrs, reported by Surius, on the 22d of September, and printed separately by Stevartius, is not of the stile with our St. Eucher; it may be the work of another St. Eucher, who assisted at the fourth council of Arles, in the year 524 or 529;*
but

* As above, pag. 436.

† *Compendious History of the Church*, Vol. 2. pag. 78.

‡ *Bibliothèque du cinquième Siècle*, Tom. 2. pag. 175.

but he of whom we are speaking died in 454, as Prosper remarks in his chronicle. Spanhemius, after he has told the story, says ||, “ In the mean time, as to this “ fatal end of the *Thebean* legion, and as to this St. “ *Maurice* and his companions, *Lactantius* of the death “ of persecutors, speaks not one word; and he would “ not have been silent in an affair so memorable, when “ he gives so accurate an account of the *Diocletian* per- “ secution, had it been real. *Eusebius*, *Jerom*, *Sulpitius* “ *Severus*, *Prosper*, and all the ancient historians are also “ silent about it; even the *Greeks*, as *Metaphrastes*, cited “ by *Surius*, *Tom. 4.* says, That *Maurits* and his com- “ panions were killed by *Diocletian* in *Apamia* in *Syria*, “ which vexes *Baronius* in his notes on the martyrology, “ *September 22d.* The faith of this affair is nothing “ more sure than many others of that kind, of which “ there is no end, that are made up to be a foundation “ of Churches and Monasteries in the *West*, from the “ fabulous arts advanced by *Gregory of Tours*, *Beda*, “ *Ado*, *Metaphrastes*, and the rest of the fathers of le- “ gendary tales.” Thus these very learned men upon good reasons reject this story as a legendary tale.

Tho’ the Tenth Persecution pass a little into the fourth century, yet I shall take a view of it, before I conclude this chapter. *Galerius Cæsar* began to persecute the Christians after his returning victorious from *Persia* in 297. The hatred which his mother inspired into him against them, made him that he could neither suffer any of them in his house, nor in his army. He deprived them of the offices they had about him, and gave orders to the Christian officers and soldiers, either to renounce their religion, or quit their offices and service. The General *Veturius* was charged to persecute the Christian soldiers in the year 302.

Diocletian and *Galerius* meeting at *Nicomedia* in *Bitbynia*, where the former was making sumptuous buildings to equal those at *Rome*, says *Lactantius* *, there they passed

|| Hist. Christiana, Sæc. 3. col. 771.

* De mortibus persecutorum, cap. 6.

passed the winter considering upon methods to exterminate the Christians. *Diocletian* opposed it a long time, but at last it was resolved upon. There in the 19th year of his reign, in the year of our Lord 303, upon the solemnity of our Saviour's Passion, he commanded the Churches to be pulled down to the ground*, the Bibles to be burned, the richer sort of Christians to be branded with infamy, and the vulgar to be made slaves. By subsequent orders he deprived Christians of all protection by the laws, that they could have no reparation for any injury done them†. He commanded the bishops to be every where imprisoned, and forced to sacrifice. This was but a prelude to what followed, other orders being issued, commanding those who refused to offer sacrifice, to be exposed to all manner of torments. It were tedious to reckon up the particular persons who suffered in this evil time: the eighth and ninth books of *Eusebius's* history are full of them. It may suffice us to observe from him, That the Christians were scourged to death, had their flesh torn off with pincers, were cast to lions and tygers, to wild boars and bears, provoked and enraged with fire to set upon them, were burned, beheaded, crucified, thrown into the sea, torn in pieces by distorted boughs of trees‡, roasted at a gentle fire, or by holes made on purpose, had melted lead poured into their bowels. At *Tyre* in *Phœnicia*, *Eusebius* says he was eye-witness to it‡, when cruel wild beasts, that used to devour men, as lizzards, bears, boars, and the like, were let loose against the martyrs, who stood naked to receive them, and invited them to prey upon their bodies as they were commanded; yet the beasts would not touch them, but rushed upon the spectators and persecutors. You might have seen their youths, not twenty years of age, standing without chains, praying earnestly to God; and tho' the beasts were breathing death and fury, yet they run away from these martyrs. A mad bull being let loose against five martyrs, tho' with its

horns

* *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 2, 3.*

† *Lactantius Ibid. cap. 13. pag. m. 83.*

‡ *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. cap. 9.* § *Ibid. cap. 7.*

horns it threw up into the air some spectators, and almost killed them, yet all their endeavours could not make it touch these holy martyrs, but they were at last killed with the sword; and instead of a decent burial, had their bodies cast into the sea. *Sylvanus* the bishop of *Gaza*, with 39 others, were slain in the metal-mines of *Phœnicia* *. Orders were given, that all the ministers of the Christian Churches should be put in prisons and chains. All jails were so full of bishops, presbyters, deacons, readers, exorcists, that there was no room for malefactors †. A whole city in *Phrygia*, where all the men, women, and children did worship Christ, was burned with fire, because the *Questor*, the captain, and the whole magistracy and inhabitants, would upon no account worship idols, but confessed themselves to be Christians ‖.

Maximian sought an occasion to stir up *Diocletian*, to carry on the persecution with vigour, by a fire that was raised in the Emperor's palace at *Nicomedia* ‡, the blame whereof was laid upon the Christians, tho' *Lactantius* insinuates it was done by some of *Maximian's* creatures **, to advance his designs. In the mean time, *Diocletian* went to *Rome*, to celebrate the solemnity of the twentieth year of his reign, which was observed with great festivals, and profane heathenish games. He had not staid long there, when he retired to pass over the winter at *Ravenna*. By the way he was seized with sickness, and the winter proving very cold, his disease increased, which made him think of leaving that place, and take a tour to *Asia*. When he came to *Nicomedia*, he was still worse, so as the report did sometimes go that he was dead. He had fits of madness, but with calm and sedate intervals ††. In this situation of affairs, *Maximian*, a cruel, but cunning man, persuaded *Diocletian* to resign the imperial purple, which he at last consented to, *A. D.* 304. or, as others, 305. and retired to *Salone*, where he lived private to the day of his death.

B b 2

At

* Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. cap. 13. † Ibid. cap. 6.

‖ Ibid. cap. 11. ‡ Ibid. cap. 6.

** De mortibus persecutorum, cap. 14. †† Ibid. cap. 17.

At his resignation *Constantius* and *Galerius Maximian*, were declared Emperors, and *Severus* with *Maximin* the younger created *Cæsars*. *Galerius Maximian*, as he had begun, so he was the great instrument of carrying on the Persecution. He was a cruel bloody tyrant, as *Lactantius* describes him||. And the same author says*, “ At that time there was a desolation made in the whole
 “ world, if you except *Gaul*, where *Constantius* the fa-
 “ ther of *Constantine* the Great governed. These three
 “ savage beasts have exercised their cruelties through all
 “ the provinces of the east and west. If I had a hundred
 “ tongues, and an hundred mouths, and the strongest
 “ voice in the world, I could not describe all the
 “ crimes they commit, nor rehearse the names of the
 “ punishments and tortures which their judges exercise
 “ in the provinces, against so great a multitude of inno-
 “ cent and holy persons.” It is indeed impossible for us to conceive, much more to express the cruelties of that time. *Eusebius*, who was an eye-witness of them, tells us†, “ That they were innumerable, and exceeded
 “ all relation: What a multitude of men, says he, had
 “ their right eyes bored out, and cauterized with a red-
 “ hot iron, had their left legs burnt, and were con-
 “ demned to the mines, not so much for their service as
 “ for their punishment! All which they endured
 “ with the most admirable and undaunted patience.
 “ They thronged to the tribunals of their judges, and
 “ freely told them what they were; despised the threat-
 “ nings and barbarities of their enemies, and received
 “ the fatal sentence with a smile. When persuaded to
 “ be tender of their lives, and to compassionate the
 “ case of their wives and children, they bore up against
 “ the temptation with a manly and philosophic mind,
 “ or rather with a soul truly pious and devoted to God,
 “ so as neither fears nor charms could take hold on
 “ them; at once giving undeniable evidence of their
 “ courage and fortitude, and of that divine and uncon-
 “ ceivable power of our Lord, that so strengthened them,
 “ as the acutest torments could not shake their stability,
 “ but

|| *Ib.* cap. 21. * *Ib.* cap. 16. pag. m. 87. † *Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. c. 12.*

“ but they could as easily lay down their lives, as the
 “ best philosopher, says *Origen* *, could put off his
 “ cloak.” One other passage I shall offer from *Euse-*
bius. He having discoursed of the impiety and horrid
 crimes of *Maximian* †, adds, *The Christians, contemning*
death, undervalued his tyranny; men did endure fire, sword,
crucifixion, cruel beasts, the bottom of the sea, the amputa-
tion and burning of the members of their body, the boring
of their eyes, yea famine and chains; and in fine, all torments
for religion, rather than forsake the worship of G O D, and
embrace that of Idols. Women also as well as men, by the
doctrine of the Word of God, received a manly courage, suf-
fered the same torments, and obtained the same crown of glo-
ry, willing to lose their lives, rather than yield their bodies
to be defiled. Of which he there gives many Instances.

Monfieur Godeau reckons, that in this Persecution
 there were no fewer than 17000 martyrs killed in one
 month's space. And he observes, “ That during the
 “ continuance of it, there were in the bare province of
 “ *Egypt* no less than 144000 persons who died by the
 “ violence of their persecutors, and 700000 who died
 “ through the fatigues of banishment, or of the public
 “ works, to which they were condemned †.” This per-
 secution seems to have been the first of the ten that affect-
 ed this Isle of *Britain*. I shall take occasion in the sixth
 chapter of this History to inquire into the origin of the
British Churches: Mean time we may observe from *Gil-*
das, the most ancient *British* historian we have, that by
 this persecution of *Diocletian* **, “ The Churches were
 “ thrown down, and all the books of the Holy Scriptures
 “ that could be found, were burnt in the streets, and
 “ the chosen priests of the flock of our Lord, with the
 “ innocent sheep, murdered; so as in some parts of the
 “ province no footsteps of the Christian Religion did ap-
 “ pear.”

Ten years did this persecution continue. The Empe-
 rors thought they had finished their work, and tell the
 B b 3 world,

* Contra Celsum, lib. 7. pag. 357.

† Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. cap. 15.

‡ Dr. Calamy's Sermon on Matth. xvi. 18.

** *Gildas de excidio Britanniae*, non longè ab initio.

world, as in some antient inscriptions * found at *Clunia* in *Spain*, *That they had utterly destroyed the name and superstition of the Christians, and had restored and propagated the worship of the Gods.* It seems they grant that Paganism was at a low ebb before they attempted to restore it, and to destroy Christianity. But they were far deceived in their vain boasting assertions; Christianity was not destroyed, but rather farther propagated; and where they had done their utmost to ruin it, even there it had a glorious resurrection out of its grave, and paganism hastened to ruin, as we shall hear in the following chapter.

Divine vengeance did soon pursue many of the persecutors, who had an active hand in this and the former persecutions of the Christian Church. This is so frequently noticed by ecclesiastic historians, that I cannot but with them also observe, That *Nero* being thrust from his throne, and perceiving himself in danger of death, became his own executioner †; *Domitian* was killed by his own servants, *Trajan* died of a paralytic and hydroptic disease, *Hadrian* of a very terrible distemper, accompanied with terror of Mind, as appears by some of his last words formerly rehearsed ||; *Antoninus Philoſophus* remitted the persecution, and died of an apoplexy; *Severus*, after he persecuted the Church, never prospered in his Affairs, and was taken off by the treachery of his wicked son. *Maximinus* reigned but three years, and died a violent death **. As to *Decius*, we have already heard that he was drowned in a marsh, and his body never found ††. *Lactantius* says of him, *That he received not the honour of being buried, but was marked out as an enemy to God, and his body exposed as a prey to fowls and beasts*

* *DIOCLETIANVS. IOVIVS. ET. MAXIMIAN. HERCVLEVS. CAES. AVGG. AMPLIFICATO. PER. ORIENTEM. ET. OCCIDENTEM. IMP. ROM. ET. NOMINE. CHRISTIANORUM. DELETO. QUI. REMP. EVERTEBANT.* Gruteri Inscription. pag. 280. Num. 3. *DIOCLETIAN. CAES. AVG. GALERIO. IN. ORIENTE. ADOPT. SVPERSTITIONE. CHRIST. VBIQVE. DELETA. ET. CVLTV. DEOR. PROPAGATO.* Ibid. Num. 4. Cave's primitive Christianity, pag. 321. Spanhem. F. F. Hist. Christiana, col. 815.

† Sueton. Nero. cap. 49.

|| See above pag. 336. and the Authors there cited.

** Spanhemii F. F. Hist. Christiana, col. 800. § 2.

†† See above pag. 359.

*beasts**. Of *Valerian's* death we have discoursed already †. And as to those concerned in this tenth and last Persecution, *Diocletian*, soon after it commenced, was obliged to resign the empire, and when he was old was disordered in his mind, thunder-struck, or killed by poison. *Maximianus Hercules* was spoiled of his empire and strangled; *Maximianus Galerius* was smitten with a dreadful ulcer, and nasty disease, as is at large described by *Lactantius* ||. And 'tis to be remarked, that when the disease prevail'd upon him, he emitted an edict, recorded by *Lactantius* †*, and by *Eusebius* ||†, ordering the Persecution to be stopt; yea, allowing the Christians peaceably to enjoy their religion and their assemblies, and desiring them to pray to God for his health, and the prosperity of the republic, that they might enjoy his protection, and live quietly under it. However, soon after this he expired in torments. *Severus* cut his own veins and died**. As to *Maxentius* and *Licinius*, we shall hear of their end in the following chapter. They endeavoured to set the Persecution on foot again; but all in vain, it dwindled into nothing, and Christianity triumphed.

This propagation and success of Christianity, notwithstanding all the Persecutions raised against it by the greatest potentates and emperors of the world, is a great glory to our Religion. This shews the protector thereof is God Almighty, and its original is divine; which I shall represent by translating the words of some of the ancients on this subject. Thus writes *Sulpicius Severus* ††, “ Under the reign of *Diocletian* and *Maximian*, for ten
“ years the Persecution continually preyed upon the
“ Lord's people, during which space, the whole world
“ was full of the sacred blood of Martyrs; for that glo-
“ rious death was then more greedily desired, than by
“ wretched ambition bishoprics are now. Never was
“ the world more exhausted by wars, never did we con-
B b 4 “ quer

* De mortibus persecutorum, cap. 4. † See above pag. 364.
and the Authors there cited. || De mortibus persecutorum, cap. 31,
& seqq. †* Ibid. cap. 34. ||† Hist. Eccl. lib. 8. cap. ultimo.
** Lactant. de mort. persecut. cap. 26. †† Sacrae Hist. lib. 2.
pag. m. 117.

“ quer by a greater triumph, than when with ten years
 “ suffering we could not be overcome.” This may be
 of great force to persuade the world of the truth of the
 Christian Religion, and to make strangers and enemies
 to embrace it. Thus *Tertullian* speaks to the *Gentiles* *,
 “ Good governours, you may torment, afflict and vex
 “ us ; your wickedness does try our innocence, and
 “ therefore God permits us to suffer it. Your cruelty
 “ is to no purpose ; ’tis but a stronger invitation to
 “ bring others to our sect. The oftner we are mowed
 “ down, the faster we spring up again. The blood of
 “ Christians is the seed of the Church. Many of your
 “ philosophers have exhorted their hearers to patience
 “ under death and sufferings ; as *Cicero* in his *Tusculans*,
 “ *Seneca*, *Diogenes*, *Pyrrhon* and *Callinicus* ; but could
 “ never make so many profelytes, with all their fine
 “ discourses, as the Christians by their actions. That
 “ very obstinacy you charge upon us, is a teacher to
 “ instruct others. For who beholding such things,
 “ will not be moved to enquire what is the truth whence
 “ they proceed ? and when he has found it, will em-
 “ brace it ? and having embraced, will desire to suffer,
 “ that he may obtain the full grace of God, and be
 “ assured of complete pardon by the shedding of his
 “ blood ? Therefore we give thanks for your sentence,
 “ knowing that the judgments of men do not agree
 “ with that of God : For when we are condemned by
 “ you, we are absolved by God.”

Lactantius manages the same argument with great
 strength of reason †. “ Since, *says he*, our number is
 “ encreased from among those who once worshipped
 “ the Heathen Deities, and is never lessened, no not
 “ in the hottest persecution, men may be defiled by
 “ seeing these abominable sacrifices, but cannot be
 “ turned away from God, for truth is strong and will
 “ prevail. Who then is so blind and stupid, as not to
 “ see in what party true wisdom does reside ? But alas
 “ they are so blinded with rage and malice, as to think all
 “ to

* Apologet. cap. ult. pag. m. 55.

† De Justitia, lib. 5. cap. 13. pag. m. 432, & seqq.

“ to be fools, who, when it is in their power to escape
“ punishment, chuse rather to be tortured and die.
“ But they may be persuaded this is no such folly,
“ wherein so many thousands, through the whole world,
“ so unanimously agree. Suppose women, through the
“ weakness of their sex, (and they are pleased sometimes
“ to call our Religion old wives superstition,) should
“ be deceived, certainly men are wiser. If children
“ and young men are rash, yet old men, and those of
“ a mature age, are of a more solid judgment. If one
“ city play the fool, innumerable others cannot be
“ guilty of the same folly. If one province and na-
“ tion want care and providence, all the rest cannot
“ lack understanding to judge what is right. Now,
“ when the divine law is entertained, from the rising
“ of the sun to the going down thereof, and every
“ sex, age, nation and country serve God with one heart
“ and one soul; when there is every where the same
“ patience and contempt of death, every one must be
“ persuaded, that it is not without cause, that’s main-
“ tain’d even unto death. There’s a solid foundation
“ for that religion that is not shattered by persecutions
“ and injuries, but rather increased, and render’d more
“ firm and stable.—— When the very common
“ people see men torn in pieces by various engines
“ of torment, and yet maintain patience unconquera-
“ ble, amidst their tired tormentors, they cannot but
“ think, as they have ground to do, that the consent
“ of so many, and their perseverance unto the death,
“ cannot be in vain; and that even patience it self,
“ without divine assistance, can never be able to over-
“ come such exquisite torments.” This, and more to
this purpose*, has this Apologist: And the experience
of the world did verify the truth of it, Christianity
gaining ground, and conquering opposition by nothing
more than by the patience and constancy of its pro-
fessors, till it had subdued the empire it self to the ac-
knowledgment of the truth, as will appear more fully
in the following chapter. Mean time I conclude this
with

* See above page 286, 287.

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with the words of the same *Lactantius* * : “ Where are
 “ now the magnificent and famous names of *Jovii* and
 “ *Herculei*, which *Diocletian* and *Maximian* first in-
 “ gently assumed, and transmitted to their successors?
 “ Let us celebrate the triumph of God with joy,
 “ and sing the victory of our Lord, giving him the
 “ praises which are due to his name ; and by frequent
 “ prayers, night and day, let us desire that the peace
 “ which he has given to his Church, after ten years suf-
 “ ferings, he may confirm for ever.”

C H A P. IV.

*Of the Propagation of the Christian Religion,
 and of the Ruin of Paganism in the Fourth
 Century.*

WE have seen the Christian Church oppressed by a continued tract of violent persecution. But the kingdom of our Redeemer *shall never be destroyed ; it shall break in pieces and consume other kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.* No less than a divine power could banish heathenish idolatry, which had been the religion of the world for so many ages, that powerfully influenced the minds of deluded men, and was firmly rooted by custom, laws, and inveterate prescription, supported by the arts of Satan, and by all the power of the *Romans*, who had then dominion over the world : yet now we shall see idolatry ruined and abandoned, and the *Roman Empire* itself become Christian.

To set this great event in a true light, we must consider some things memorable in the life of *Constantine* the Great, the first Christian Emperor. His father's name was *Constantius Chlorus*, who favoured the Christians more than any of his Colleague Emperors. His mother was called *Flavia Julia Helena*. The learned † *Spanheim* reckons

* De mortibus persecutorum, capite ult.

† *Spanhemii* F.F. Hist. Christiana, Col. 822, Num. 2.

reckons him to have been born, *A. D.* 272. He resided for some time in the court of *Diocletian*, and afterward in that of *Galerius Maximian* in the East. *Galerius* hated his father, and by sports and violent martial exercises, thought to have dispatched his son out of the way: but divine providence still preserved him. His father often sent for him, and he had all the inclination in the world to go to him; but his journey was often delayed by the influence of the Emperor with whom he resided. His father in his last sickness, renewed his importunity, and *Galerius* gave him a warrant to be gone, yet designed to stop his journey; and therefore willed him to wait on him, and receive his final commands next morning: but he went off immediately, and at every stage ham-stringed all the post-horses, except those he rode on, to prevent being pursued. He arrived at *York* in *Britain* four days before his father died, which happened on the 25th day of *July*, in the year of our Lord 306. By his last will he succeeded as Emperor in the West, and was cheerfully submitted to by the army, and by all the western provinces. Soon after his father's funerals he past from *Britain* into *Gaul*, where he resided the first six years of his reign; all which time he continued in the religion wherein he had been educated, a *Gentile*, and satisfied himself with the title of *Cæsar*, not assuming that of *Augustus* or *Emperor*, expecting the senior Emperor, viz. *Maxentius*, would have invited him to accept of it; which he was far from doing. But he stood in no need of his approbation; his father's will, the universal consent of the army, and the whole West put his right beyond dispute. Besides *Maximianus Hercules*, (who some years ago had laid down the purple, and did now endeavour to resume it; but upon some bad success in his affairs, fled to *Gaul*, under the protection of *Constantine*,) gave him the title of *Augustus* with his daughter *Fausta* to wife.

Constantine being informed from all hands, of the intolerable outrages and insolences committed by *Maxentius*, the Son of *Maximianus Hercules*, who was made Emperor at *Rome*, and being solicited by an embassy sent

sent him by the senate and people, took a resolution to free the city from the tyranny and extravagances of that usurper. When he engaged in this expedition, he began to think of some assistance* beyond the meer strength and courage of his army. He observed the fatal miscarriages of his predecessors, who had worshipped a multiplicity of Gods by formal and superstitious rites; notwithstanding which, their wars were unsuccessful, and themselves were brought to unfortunate ends: whereas his own father, who acknowledged one only God, the supreme governour of the world, and had protected and encouraged the Christians even in his own palace, had succeeded in his undertakings. He resolved then to lay aside the vulgar deities, and adhere only to the God of his father; in which design his mother *Helena*, a religious woman, encouraged him. To this one God he addressed himself, beseeching that he would make himself known to him. Heaven heard his prayer, and answered it in a miraculous manner, so as *Eusebius*, who reports the matter, grants it would have been incredible, if he had not heard it from *Constantine's* own mouth†. The army being on their march, and the Emperor taken up in his ejaculations, when the sun was declining, there appeared a pillar of light in the heavens in the fashion of a cross, with this inscription, ΤΟΥΤΩ ΝΙΚΑ, *In this overcome*. The Emperor and the whole army were amazed at this sight; but at night our Lord appeared to him in a dream, with the cross in his hand he had seen the day before, commanding him to make a royal standard like that he had seen in the heavens, and cause it to be borne before him in his wars, as an ensign of safety and victory. Early next morning he ordered workmen to do it with exquisite art and magnificence. The device, *In this overcome*, he not only wore in his shields afterward, as *Eusebius* tells us, but it appears also by some of his coins extant at this day, the standard or *Labarum* he carried always in the wars before him. *Eusebius* assures us he had often

* *Eusebius de vita Constantini*, lib. 1. cap. 26, 27.

† *Eusebius de vita Constantini*, lib. 1. cap. 28, 29.

often seen it *. The figure thereof may be observed in *Spanhemius's Church-History* †.

The Emperor had a mighty desire to be further instructed in these divine signs, and therefore called for some Christian Bishops to instruct him, who explained the mysteries of our religion, of our Redeemer's incarnation, life and death, and of the way of salvation through him. He heard their discourses with pleasure, had them always with him, and took delight in reading the Scriptures, and ordered that God who had appeared to him, to be honoured with divine worship ‡. Yet he did not at first openly declare himself a Christian, but kept on the reserve, and marched his army forward through *Italy*, to the very walls of *Rome*, where he encamped with 90000 foot, and 8000 horse in a plain before the city ||. *Maxentius* his adversary was a man who divided his time between vile debauchery ** and profane heathenish superstition, never going out of the city, and seldom out of his palace. Now when he must stir abroad, he plied the altars with sacrifices, consulted the *Sibylline Books*, and then goes to his army, which consisted of 170000 foot, and 18000 horse. The engagement was fierce and bloody, but many of *Maxentius's* army did not like him, having smarted under his tyranny. Victory having hovered a while, rested on *Constantine's* side; the army of the enemy being routed, fled, thinking to escape the nearest way by a bridge of boats, which *Maxentius* had built over the *Tyber*, with springs to drown *Constantine* if he passed that way. He fell into the pit he had digged for others ††; for the engines giving way, the boats pressed with weight, sunk into the bottom of the river, and *Maxentius* himself with them, whose body being found, his head was struck off, and carried on a pole before the conquering army.

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* De Vita Constant. lib. 1. cap. 30.

† Hist. Christiana in *Fol.* Sæc. 4. col. 825.

‡ Euseb. de Vita Const. lib. 1. cap. 32.

|| Zosimus, lib. 2. pag. 86.

** Euseb. de Vita Constant. lib. 1. cap. 33—36.

†† Ibid. cap. 37, 38.

A signal and entire victory being thus gained, *Constantine* made a triumphant entry into the city, the nobility and people calling him their Saviour, and the author of their happiness. He set up a monument of gratitude to God who had gained him the victory; the inscription thereof you have at the foot of the page||. Having settled affairs at *Rome*, and endeared himself to all sorts of persons, he began by degrees to declare in favour of the Christians. The first edict of that kind upon record, was that published at *Milan*, *A. D.* 312, by himself and his brother-in-law *Licinius*, who had some time since been declared *Cæsar*, where* they granted a general toleration to all religions, and more especially to Christians, that none should disturb them in their profession, or in their way of worship, nor hinder any who had a mind to embrace Christianity; and that their Churches, and places of public assemblies, and all the incomes and revenues belonging to them, that had been confiscated, and taken away, should immediately be freely and entirely restored to them, and the present purchasers or possessors be repaid out of the treasury.

A copy of this edict they sent to *Maximinus*, who then governed in the East. He being an obstinate Heathen, neither willing to grant, nor daring to deny their desires, directed a rescript to *Sabinus*†, “ declaring
 “ what care his predecessors *Diocletian* and *Maximian*
 “ had used to secure their religion against the encroach-
 “ ments of Christianity: however his pleasure was, that
 “ the governours of the provinces should use no severity
 “ against the Christians, but treat them with mildness
 “ and moderation, and rather try by clemency and per-
 “ suasion to reduce them to the worship of the Gods:
 “ but if they had rather persist in their own religion,
 “ they should be left to the freedom of their choice.”
 This rescript was extorted, and so straitned, as it did little good. The Christians could not trust *Maximinus*: he promised only an indemnity from trouble; they durst
 neither

|| Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. 9. cap. 9. HOC. SALVTARI. SIGNO. VERACI. FORTITVDINIS. INDICIO. CIVITATEM. NOSTRAM. IUGO. TYRANNI. EREPTAM. LIBERAVI. DENIQVE. ET. SENATVM. ET. POPVLVM. RO. LIBERATVM. PRISCO. SPLENDORI. ET. CLARITATI. RESTITVI.

* Ibid. lib. 10. cap. 5.

† Ibid. lib. 9. cap. 9.

neither build Churches, nor keep public assemblies, but only wait a more favourable opportunity.

Mean time *Constantine* did proceed with sincere kindness ; he received the Christian Bishops with all honour and respect, entertaining them at his own table. He exempted them from all secular employs, received their appeals, and appointed commissioners to umpire and end the controversies that arose among them ; yea, freed the Churches from the taxes * ordinarily assessed upon all other persons. He took away the punishment by crucifixion, out of respect to our Saviour's Passion. He neglected the *Ludi Sæculares*, or solemn games kept once every hundred years with great magnificence, pompous sacrifices, and a train of profane heathenish ceremonies. The time of their celebration was *A.D.* 313 ; but the Emperor took no notice of them, which *Zosimus* loudly complains of †, as a sign of the Overthrow of their *Gentile Religion*. It added to their trouble, that they found *Maximinus* in the East, upon whom they so much relied, begin to turn upon them ; he being totally defeated by *Licinius*, tho' the soothsayers had promised him success and victory, at his return home put several of them to death as impostors ; and to keep in with a numerous party, he published an edict in behalf of the Christians ‡, where he confirmed the rescript he had sent to *Sabinus* the year before, and supplied what was defective in it, by restoring their Churches with all those revenues and possessions that had been seized and brought in to the exchequer, and either sold or bestowed to public corporations or private persons.

Soon after this *Maximinus* was seized with torments all over his body, he became stark blind, and wasted to nothing, and died at *Tarsus*, confessing on his death-bed, that it was a just punishment for his wicked proceedings against Christ and his religion. The Churches began to flourish, and the Christians then every where enjoyed a serene and prosperous season.

I

But

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 11. tit. 1.

† Lib. 2. Cap. 7.

‡ Extat apud Euseb. in Hist. Eccl. lib. 9. cap. 10.

But this tranquillity lasted not long, *Licinius* had hitherto dissembled with God, with *Constantine*, and with the world; but having got the whole eastern empire at his command, he put off the mask, and heartily espoused the cause of the heathens. By a law he expressly forbade Christian Bishops to go into the houses of the *Gentiles*, that they might have no opportunity to propagate Christianity among them *. Yea, he raised a hot persecution against the Church: only, to use the words of *Socrates* †, *This was local, not universal; so far as the power of Licinius reached, he attacked Christians with horrid cruelty: so that, as Eusebius observes ‡, The East and the West were like night and day, a darkness overspread the East, while the West had a sun-shine of prosperity and peace.* To chastise *Licinius's* monstrous ingratitude, inconstancy and perfidy, *Constantine* resolved upon an expedition against him; the armies first met at *Cybalis* in *Pannonia*, where *Licinius* was routed. Afterward he re-collected forces, and engaged in *Thrace*; at which time *Constantine*, in the midst of his Bishops and Chaplains, was earnestly by prayer soliciting heaven to be on his side ||; while *Licinius* laughed at him, and calling for his priests and fortune-tellers, goes to sacrificing, and enquired what judgment they made by the entrails of the beasts, and they all promised him success. In a grove thick set with images, full of lighted torches, after the usual heathenish sacrifices were performed, he made an oration to his officers, which *Eusebius* says he had from the mouth of those who heard it, telling them **, *The enemy who fights against us, is one who has renounced the religion of his country, and joined himself to an impious sect, who has chosen I know not what strange Deity for his God, with whose infamous sign he dishonours his army. This day will shew which of us is in the right, whether ours or theirs be the true Gods. If this strange and obscure God of Constantine shall get the better, no man will then any longer doubt which God he ought to worship, but will go over to the*

* *Socrates, Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 3.*† *Ibidem.*‡ *De Vita Constantini, lib. 1. cap. 49.*|| *Ibid. lib. 2. cap. 1. — 19.* ** *De Vita Constantini, cap. 5, 6.*

*the most powerful, and bid adieu to those to whom we have ilghted tapers to so little purpose. But if ours carry the day, which no man can doubt, we may securely go on in our attempts against these contemners of the Gods. Constantine in the battle caused the imperial standard of the cross to be carried before him; which way soever it turned, the enemy fled, till their forces being wholly broken, the greater part of them threw down their arms and yielded. Licinius himself fled, and by his usual method of treachery, begged peace of Constantine, which was granted. But so soon as he got a little breathing, he raised a new army, and charged his soldiers to offer no violence to the standard of the cross, nor engage near it. The battle, tho' bloody, went against him; he fled to Nicomedia, whither Constantine followed and besieged him. He surrendered, and was sent to Thessalonica; where, upon attempting new seditions he was put to death, which Spanhemius * computes to have happened A. D. 324.*

By the death of *Licinius*, the whole government of the *Roman Empire* devolved upon *Constantine*. He immediately restored tranquillity to the Christians, and directed several orders to the governours of the provinces, whereby they recalled the banished, released those who had been confined, restored those who had been put out of their offices and estates which had been unjustly taken away; set at liberty the imprisoned, and those who had been condemned to mines or other slavery, and bountifully rewarded all of them, rescinding all the persecuting constitutions of *Licinius*. As for such who had suffered martyrdom, he commanded their goods and lands to be restored to those who were next in kindred; or, where they had no relations, to be appropriated to the use of the Church †, as appears by his large edict sent to the governours of *Palestine*. *Eusebius* says he copied it from the authentic law that was kept among them, under the Emperor's own hand ‡. The like was probably sent to other places.

The

* Hist. Christiana, Folio, col. 829. † Euseb. de Vita Constantini, lib. 2. cap. 19—21.

‡ Ibid. cap. 24.

386 *Propagation of Christianity.* Cent. IV.

The *Gentiles* having taken great encouragement under the patronage of *Licinius*, *Constantine* found himself obliged to put some check upon them, which he did by laws directed to *Maximus*, the governour of the city *, and to the people, which may be computed, by the date of the consuls, to have been in the year of our Lord 319. *Forbidding the Aruspices, and the rest of the divining tribe, to exercise their skill in any private house, under the pain of being burned; and the person who received them into his house, to have his goods confiscated and himself banished: yet they had leave to exercise their art in public temples.* Two years after this he gave orders, that the answers of these diviners should be sent to the Emperor in writing †. This was a great restraint upon them. Six months after, he prohibited all magic charms against the health or life of any person, or to inveigle affections in unchaste love, to cure distempers, or drive away storms and tempests ‡. The same year he provided, that slaves who formerly used to be set free in pagan temples, might be set at liberty in Christian Churches, in presence of the Bishop ||, and that this might be performed on the sabbath; tho' all contentions and law-suits were forbid on that day.

He took also strict care for the observation of the Lord's day, ordering it to be set apart for prayer and holy exercises, that all persons, as far as possible, might be induced to observe it; that his great officers and commanders in the army might set them a good example **, by attending the Emperor in his devotions on that day; and that the very heathens in the army should be employed in prayer to God, as *the only giver of victory*. To this end he composed a form of prayer, and ordered them to learn it by heart. The like care he took for observation of *Friday*, in memory of our Saviour's Passion.

The *Gentiles* vexed with this prosperity of the Christians, forced them to join in celebrating their *Lustra*,
their

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 9. tit. 16. lege 1, 2. pag. m. 228.

† Ibid. lib. 16. tit. 10. lege 1.

‡ Ibid. lib. 9. tit. 16. lege 3.

|| Ibid. lib. 4. tit. 7. lege unicâ.

** Euseb. de Vita Constantini, lib. 4. cap. 18, 19, 20.

their processions attended with sacrifices and hymns. This was complained of to *Constantine*, who, by a law, computed *May 24, A. D. 323* †, expressly forbids any such compulsion to be used towards the Christians, under the penalty, that the breakers of this mandate, should be publickly beaten with clubs if a plebeian, and severely fined if of better rank. In this edict he calls Christianity *the most holy law*, and Gentilism, *alienam superstitionem, a strange superstition*.

He also took care that none should be governours or presidents, but who were Christians; or if Gentiles, that they should offer no sacrifices ||. He extends this even to the *Pretorian Prefect*, the highest office in the Empire. He published another law, which he sent to the governours of the Provinces, for erecting, enlarging and beautifying Christian Churches at his own charge; notice whereof he gave to the bishops of the several Churches. That to *Eusebius*, being the first of that kind, was written in the Year 324, soon after the defeat of *Licinius*, whom he calls *the great Dragon*, which God by his ministry had removed from the government. This letter is still extant *. The form of these ancient Christian Churches, and several things memorable about them, may be seen in *Spanheim's* large Church History ‡.

The Emperor also wrote a large pathetic exhortatory epistle to the provincial governours of the East, where, with great wisdom and piety, he exhorts all his subjects to embrace Christianity |||, *a Religion to which even the heathen deities gave testimony; whereof, he assures them, he himself was a witness, that Apollo's oracle, out of a cave or dark recess, gave this response, That certain righteous persons where the cause why he could not any longer give true answers, and therefore the Tripods uttered false divinations.* When the Emperor *Diocletian*,

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whose

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† Codex Theod. lib. 16. tit. 2. lege 5.

|| Sozomen. hist. eccl. lib. 1. cap. 8.

* Apud. Euseb. de vita Const. lib. 2. cap. 41.

‡ Hist. Christiana in folio, col. 861, & seqq.

||| Euseb. de vita Const. lib. 2. cap. 43, --- 46.

whose court he then, being a young man, attended, asked, *Who these just men were?* one of the priests answered, *they were the Christians.* Which so enraged the bloody Emperor, that he emitted most cruel edicts against them, commanding the judges to provide more exquisite torments than those formerly used. Tho' *Constantine* used prayers and arguments to convert the Gentiles to the truth, yet he would not force them to change their Religion, but left them to the freedom of their own choice. About the same time he repealed the edicts of his predecessors, which they, to maintain the heathenish superstition, had emitted against the Christians, in the time of the persecutions*, and the acts of inferior judges. But this was not to extend to any thing which they had done warrantably according to law.

Peace and tranquillity being restored to the world, *Constantine* transferred the seat of the empire from *Rome* to *Byzantium* in *Thracia*, which he re-edified, beautified and enlarged with all the ornaments art could contrive, and by a law, commanded it should be called *New Rome*; tho', in despite of his edict, it retains the honour of his name, and is called *Constantinople* to this day. He finished and dedicated it, *A. D.* 330.

He built many noble churches and oratories, both in city and country, wherein he suffered no Gentile altars or images to be placed, nor any heathenish festivals to be solemnized†. Yea the folly, imposture and vanity of these abominable idols was exposed in the streets. Yet he did not demolish or deface all the heathen temples, some of them were standing in the reign of the Emperor *Theodosius*, as we find from *Libanius* a pagan philosopher, who wrote about that time. He‖ complains loudly of *Constantine* for spoiling of their temples, as if for this his posterity had been cut off: Yet he owns that some of these buildings remained, tho' spoiled of their honour. 'Tis certain the capital at *Rome*, the temple of *Serapis* at *Alexandria*, of *Apollo* at *Daphne*, in the suburbs of *Antioch*,

* Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 8.

† Euseb. de vita Constant. lib. 3. cap. 48.

‖ Libanii oratio de templis, pag. 9. & 22.

Antioch, some ancient temples at *Edeffa*, *Gaza*, and in some other places, remained long after *Constantine's* time; and we shall meet with some of them afterward. At this day the *Panttheon* at *Rome*, from being a temple to heathens, is converted to a church for popish idolaters. But this Christian Emperor not only took away the pagan temples, but also the treasures and revenues belonging to them, which he imployed in building those magnificent structures, wherewith he adorned the imperial city.

Nor did the barbarous nations go without their share, in the happy influences of Christianity. The *Indians* were brought over to the Christian Faith by the ministry of *Frumentius* *, who had been educated for the greatest part of his time among them. *Atbanasius* having ordained him, sent him back to them, to advance further this good work. The *Iberians*, since called *Georgians*, are said to have been converted by a female captive, who being a Christian, was famous among them for the piety of her life, and her miraculous cures: among others, she cured the Queen of the country. And upon her solicitations, and a remarkable deliverance which the King received, he was persuaded to become a Christian, and became so zealous as to preach to his subjects, and exhort them to embrace the faith. A Church was erected, and an embassy sent to *Constantine*, to request that Bishops and Preachers might be sent among them, to carry on and advance that good work; which was accordingly done. The Emperor *Constantine* made *Bacurius* the King of that country to be comptroller of his household. He was a great Friend to true Religion. When he commanded in *Palestine*, *Rufin* says he had this relation from him, and other particulars to be had in that author †. The like success the Christian Religion had in other countries, of which *Sozomen* gives this account ||; *That the barbarous Nations having made*

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several

* *Rufini Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 4. Socrates lib. 1. cap. 19. Sozomen lib. 2. cap. 24. See also Vol. 2. of this History, chap. 7. Church of Ethiopia.* † *Rufini Hist. Eccl. lib. 1. cap. 10.* || *Sozomen Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 6.*

several irruptions into Thracia, many Christian Priests were taken captives, who being of a holy blameless life, did reprove the vices of the Barbarians; and by calling on the Name of Christ did cure their sick. This made them see an excellency in their Religion, and enquire after it; and the captives employed all their time to promote their conversion. By these means were the inhabitants upon the Rhine, the Celtæ, some of the remote parts of Gaul, and the people upon the river Danube, brought to entertain the Gospel.

The Emperor had hitherto tried by patience and persuasion to reclaim the *Gentile* world; but finding very many obstinate, he proceeded to root out idolatry by rougher methods. To this end he ordered commissioners every where to open the pagan temples, to throw up the doors of the *Revestries*, so as those mysteries, which formerly none but the Priests might behold, were now publickly exposed to the eyes of the people. Many of the Temples were untiled and laid open to the injuries of the weather: the common people were afraid; the Priests and *Flamens*, being left alone, submitted, and with their own hands brought forth their idols, stript of their ornaments, and their precious things which were said to have come from *Jupiter* *. The Statues of gold and silver were melted down, and coined into money. Some of the choicest of their idols, which were curiously wrought, were brought to *Constantinople*, and there drawn with ropes up and down the streets, and set for the people to behold and laugh at. There you might see the *Pythian*, here the *Sminthian Apollo* †; in the *Circus*, the *Tripodes* brought from *Delphos*; in the palace, the *Muses of Helicon*; and in another place, the statue of *Pan*; all monuments of the madness of heathenish superstition.

At *Aphacus* in *Phœnicia*, near the top of Mount *Libanus*, stood a famous Temple in the midst of a grove, dedicated to *Venus*, where men worshipped, while the women prostituted themselves to all manner of wickedness in every corner. This Temple the Emperor commanded to be pulled down, its gifts and ornaments to be

* Ibidem, lib. 2. cap. 5.
cap. 54, 55.

† Euseb. de vita Constant. lib. 3.

be disposed of, and that leud society to be scattered *. There was another dedicated to her at *Heliopolis*, in the same country, where the Men gave leave even to their wives and daughters to prostitute themselves in honour of the goddess: this he abolished, and built a Church in the room of it. *Abraham's Oak at Mamre*, which for so many ages had been annually defiled with Jewish and Heathenish solemnities, he removed, and erected a Christian Church there. Upon these accounts *Eunapius*, a bigotted Pagan, who mortally hated the Christians, says †, *Constantine destroyed the most beautiful temples of the gods over the whole world, and erected Christian churches or houses, οἰκήματα, in the room of them.*

At *Alexandria* the Emperor dispersed and banished the *Androgyni*, or Priests of *Nile*, who used to perform ridiculous ceremonies to that river, which they accounted a deity; yea, some of them, says *Eusebius* ‡, were put to death for their impieties and obscenities. He caused the *Nilometrium*, whereby they used to measure the height of that river, to be removed out of the Temple of *Serapis*, unto the Christian Church at *Alexandria* ||. When the *Gentiles* cried out the goddess would be angry, *Nile* would no more overflow its banks, the event shewed the predictions of their Priests foolish, the river overflowing in greater measure next year than before. In short, by several laws he forbad to offer sacrifices, to erect images to the gods, or to exercise any of their mysterious rites. By these means the kingdom of Satan did fall like lightning, the old Serpent fell under the power of the Cross. In memory whereof, this good Emperor caused some of his coins, itill extant, to be stamped on the reverse, with the figure of a Serpent bowing under, and struck through with the banner of the Cross; all which, says *Eusebius* **, was foretold by the prophet *Isaiab* xxvii. 1. When God in his infinite goodness had accomplished so great a reformation, and advanced

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* Ibidem, cap. 56. See in this History, chap. 2. pag. 202.

† Eunapius de vitis Philosophorum, pag. m. 34.

‡ De vita Constantini, lib. 4. cap. 25. || Ibid. Socrates H. A. Ecc. lib. 1. cap. 18.

** De vita Constant. lib. 3. cap. 3.

Christianity, which had been so much trampled upon, to be the Religion of the empire; Bishops or Pastors were settled every where in the Churches. Of many of them who were in the principal cities, there are yet catalogues extant in the Ecclesiastic Historians. The great work for which God had raised up this first Christian Emperor being done, his death soon approached: but before we discourse of it, we may further observe;

That by the consent of ancient Historians * it appears that this religious Prince *Constantine the Great*, was not baptized till a little before his death. When he found himself in a bad state of health, he desired to be carried to *Helenopolis* in *Bithynia*, where he was first made a *Catechumen*, he kneeling, and humbly beseeching the pardon of his sins; thence he went to the suburbs of *Nicomedia*, and called for the Bishops, desiring the seal of eternal life, promising that if God prolonged his life, he would endeavour a holy conversation: whereupon *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia* baptized him in a solemn manner, being clothed with white garments, and laid upon his bed, he soon after died in full hope of eternal life. If the grounds of this delay of his baptism be enquired into, *Spanhemius* † offers the following reasons: 1st, It was an opinion then received, that Baptism might be delayed even to the end of one's life, since in this washing of regeneration there was an expiation made for all sin and guilt. 2^{dly}, *Constantine* resolved to delay it, till he had occasion to wash in the waters of *Jordan* after our Saviour's example, which is the reason assigned by *Eusebius* and *Theodoret* ‖. 3^{dly}, To these he adds, that the Emperor being much employed in wars, during the course of his life; and being obliged, for reasons of state, as is already noticed, to cut off his brother-in-law *Licinius*, and his son *Crispus*, with his wife *Fausta*, for alleged incest; the consciousness of these facts made him delay his being admitted to the holy Mysteries till near the

* Ibid. lib. 4. cap. 61, 62. Hieronym. in Chronico ad A.D. 340. Socrates Hist. lib. 1. cap. 39. Sozomen. Hist. lib. 2. cap. ult. Theodoret. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 31. † Hist. Christiana in Fol. Sac. 4. col. 834, 835. ‖ Locis citatis.

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the end of his life. This great Prince died, as *Spanbe-
mius* * and others reckon, *May 22. A. D. 338.* of his age
the 64th, and of his reign the 31st year; *Titianus* and
Felicianus being then consuls.

His death was a signal loss to the Church, and a great
grief to all good men. In his time heathenish idolatry
was banished out of the principal cities of the *Roman*
empire, and remained only in some country villages,
and therefore in the *Theodosian Codex* † 'tis called *Paga-
nism*; which name we shall frequently use in the sequel
of this history. He erected many Christian Schools
throughout the empire, and enriched the Christian
Church with ecclesiastic revenues and benefices; grant-
ing to the same not only the revenues that belonged to
the Gods of the *Gentiles*, to their Temples, Priests, Fla-
mens, and to the rest of that tribe, but also large dona-
tives over the *Roman* empire, and the tithes, with the
inheritances of martyrs, confessors, and banished persons,
where they wanted heirs and successors; with power to
others to extend their liberality the same way. All this
appears from the imperial constitutions in the *Theodosian*
Codex ‖, and other ancient writers quoted at the foot of
the page ‡. From this time riches did increase in the
Church: but the daughter devoured the mother;
schisms, divisions, and many superstitious customs crept
in with them. *Eusebius* gives an excellent character of
this great Prince †, *That armed with no other breast-plate*
than that of piety, and carrying no other banner save that
of the cross, he triumphed over his enemies and their idols.
His vacant time he spent in prayer, reading the scrip-
tures, and other divine exercises. He formed the whole
court after this example. He founded new Churches,
and rebuilt old ones with great magnificence, as at *Ni-
comedia*, *Constantinople* and *Antioch*. Such an eminent
piety God rewarded with the enlargement of the empire,
the

* Ubi supra.

† Codex Theodosii, lib. 16. 10. de Paganis.

‖ De Episcopis, Ecclesiis, Clericis, Judæis, Paganis, Sacrificiis.

‡ Euseb. de vita Constantini, lib. 2. cap. 35, 36. Sozomen. Hist. lib. 2.
cap. 5. Ambrosii Epistolæ, lib. 5. Epist. 30, 31. † De laudibus
Constantini, cap. 9.

the prosperity of his family, and *with a crown that fadeth not away.*

Constantine upon his death-bed divided the empire among his three sons; to *Constantine* the eldest he assigned *Britain, Spain, Gaul*; to *Constantius* the second, he gave *Myfia, Thrace, the East, and Egypt*; to *Constans*, the youngest of his sons, he left *Italy, Illyricum, Macedonia, Greece*, with those parts that border on the *Euxine* sea, and the remainder of *Afric*, so far as then belonged to the *Roman* Empire. These three Princes were Christians, and continued to protect our Holy Religion. *Constantine* the eldest brother had scarce reigned three years, when quarrelling with his brother *Constans* about the division of the empire, he marched his army to *Aquileia*, and was there killed in battle, *April 341*. Thereby *Constans* remained master of the West, and *Constantius* of the East.

The reign of these two brothers was so taken up with the *Arian* and other controversies, which distracted the world, and divided the State as well as the Church, which I am not now concerned to account for, that we meet with very little that concerns the Propagation of Christianity and the Overthrow of Paganism in their time. Yet we may observe, that *Sozomen* gives this account of the state of affairs then *, “ The presidents of
“ the Churches did walk circumspectly; multitudes of
“ believers, directed by them, took care to worship
“ and serve our Lord Christ; the Christian Religion was
“ every day on the growing hand; the zeal, virtue and
“ wonderful works done by Church-men did draw
“ many Heathens from *Gentile* superstition. The
“ Emperors trod in their father’s steps, in their care
“ and kindness to the Church, investing the clergy, their
“ children and domestics with many peculiar privileges
“ and immunities; they not only confirmed their fa-
“ ther’s laws, but enacted new ones, prohibiting any
“ to offer sacrifices, or to pay adoration to the images
“ of the Gods, or exercise any part of Pagan supersti-
“ tion. The temples that stood either in the cities or
“ in

* *Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 17.*

Ch. 4. *The Sons of Constantine the Great.* 395

“ in the fields, they commanded to be destroyed ; others
“ of them were given to the Church, where they wanted
“ either room or materials to build with. It was their
“ great care either to repair ruined Churches and Ora-
“ tories, or erect new ones, and these very magnificent ;
“ among which the Church of the *Emeffenes* is most
“ beautiful.”

After the battle at *Aquileia*, the Emperor *Constans* enjoying peace, discover'd his zeal against the Pagans, restraining their folly by the following law * : *The august Emperors Constantius and Constans to Madalian Vice-Prætorian Præfect* : “ Let superstition cease ; let the madness of sacrificing be abolished : for whosoever shall
“ presume, contrary to the constitution of our father, a
“ Prince of blessed memory, and contrary to the command of our clemency, to offer sacrifices, let a proper
“ and convenient punishment be inflicted, and execution immediately done upon him.” Received, *Marcellinus* and *Probinus* being consuls, that is, *A.D. vulg.* 341.

Encouraged by this and the like laws, *Julius Firmicus Maternus* wrote his book *de errore profanarum religionum*, which he dedicated to the two brother Emperors ; where after he had exposed the notorious absurdities of Paganism, he desires †, “ the Emperors to go on and make
“ a perfect reformation, and by severe laws to cut off
“ the superstition that did yet remain, that the *Roman*
“ world might no longer be infected with such pernicious wickedness and impieties, which gain ground
“ by custom and connivance. They must not in this
“ case stand to humour every palate. Inveterate diseases are not to be cured but by unpleasing medicines.— A little more to what they had already
“ done would lay the devil fully prostrate, and make
“ the contagion of idolatry, the venom whereof grew
“ weaker every day, wholly to evaporate and expire.—
“ Great things God had already done for them as a reward of a well-begun zeal and piety, and greater
“ blessings were reserved, when they shall have crowned
“ this

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 16. tit. 10. l. 2. religionum, cap. 17, ——— 21, & seqq.

† De errore profanarum

“ this work, which should oblige them with a pure
 “ mind to call for divine assistance.”

Magnentius, a *Barbarian* by birth, having made himself considerable in the *Roman* armies, usurped the supreme power, assumed the imperial purple, *A. D.* 350. caused the Emperor *Constans* to be murder'd, and made himself master of several provinces. *Constantius*, Emperor in the East, marched his army against him, defeated him in a bloody battle at *Mursia* in *Pannonia*, and having forced him out of *Italy* into *Gaul*, and overthrown his army once and again, the usurper at last killed himself at *Lyons*, *A. D.* 353. Thus *Constantius* became master of the whole empire, both in the East and West.

Whereas the Usurper *Magnentius*, to gain favour with the *Gentiles*, had given them leave to celebrate their sacrifices in the night, *Constantius* abolished those nocturnal sacrifices*, taking away the licence that had been granted for them; and by another law†, prohibited all manner of sacrifices, and commanded that both in city and country the Temples should be shut, and none suffer'd to go into them under pain of death, and confiscation of moveables, to the contemners of the law. *Constantius* was a great enemy to all magic, and curious diabolic arts, than which nothing was more common among the *Gentiles*. Indeed it was the life and spirit of their declining superstition: Therefore, *A. D.* 357, he emitted a law‡, “ That no man, under pain of death,
 “ might dare to consult any of these masters of divi-
 “ nation, who in the body of the rescript are designed
 “ by their several titles, viz. *Mathematici*, who judged
 “ by the course and position of the stars; *Haruspices*,
 “ who made judgment of future events by sacrifices,
 “ and the entrails of the beasts that were slain; *Harioli*,
 “ who attended the altars, offer'd up sacrifices and sup-
 “ plications, and received the answer which the Demon
 “ returned; *Augures*, who divined by the flight and
 “ chattering of birds; *Vates*, who gave out Enthusiastic
 “ inspira-

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 16. tit. 10. l. 5.

† Ibid. l. 4. ‡ Ibid. lib. 9. tit. 16. l. 4.

“ inspirations; *Chaldeans*, who calculated nativities;
“ *Magi*, who dealt in charms and conjurations, with
“ odd schemes of words; and *Malefici*, who traded in
“ necromancy, and under that pretext committed great
“ wickedness: The Emperor orders, that no person
“ should consult any of these, that this curiosity of di-
“ vination should be for ever silent; and that whoso-
“ ever does disobey this mandate, shall be punished
“ with the avenging sword.” In that same year comes
out another law against magicians*, who undertook
*to disorder the lives of innocent persons, to conjure up the
souls of the departed, to raise storms and tempests, and de-
stroy their enemies by their wicked arts:* these, as enemies
to human nature, he commands to be destroyed, *ferali
peste*; that is, as some think, to be burned alive; or
rather, to be thrown to wild beasts: either of them se-
vere punishments, but not exceeding the merit of the
crimes. In the end of *April* the same year he came to
Rome, where he regulated several things, and took away
the famous altar and image of Victory, the only idol
left there. Tho’ it had been removed by *Constans*, yet
it was restored by *Magnentius*; but was now taken away
a second time by this Emperor *Constantius*, to the great
grief and resentment of the *Gentiles*. *Symmachus* raised a
great bustle about it, as we shall hear afterwards. After
a month’s stay at *Rome*, the Emperor returned to *Milan*,
and published a new law against divination†, discharging
all under the highest penalties, either in his own court
or in that of *Julian*, then created *Cæsar*, who kept a
company of magicians about him, under the notion of
philosophers, which made the Emperor mightily to sus-
pect him.

Constantius died at *Mopsucrenæ*, in the confines of *Cili-
cia* and *Cappadocia*, *A.D.* 361. as he was preparing to
meet his cousin and successor *Julian*, who designed to
come in a hostile manner against him. ’Tis said || he
bemoaned at his death that he had named *Julian* his
successor, that he had put to death many of his own
kindred,

* Ibid. l. 5. † Codex Theodosii, lib. 9. tit. 16. l. 6.

|| Theodoret, Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 1. Nazianzen. Orat. 21.

kindred, and had so zealously promoted innovations in the Church, changing the doctrine left by his father.

We proceed now to take a view of the state of affairs under the reign of *Julian*, and of the means which the enemy of mankind then used, as his last effort to suppress Christianity and restore Paganism. In order to this, we may consider a little the life of that prince.

Julian was the youngest of the sons of *Julius Constantius*, brother by the father's side to *Constantine* the Great. He was born at *Constantinople* in the year 331. At seven years of age he was committed to the tutelage of *Mardonius* the eunuch, who trained him up in virtue and learning, under the best teachers. The Emperor afterward committed him to the care of *Eusebius* Bishop of *Nicomedia*, giving him a particular charge that this young Prince should hold no correspondence with *Libanius* *, a famous Orator, but a professed Pagan. 'Tis very difficult to chain up inclinations: The Orator's books and discourses were privately conveyed day by day, which he read with great delight, and laid before him as his copy. *Maximus* came also to *Nicomedia*, who under pretence of teaching *Julian* Philosophy, confirmed him in his love of Paganism, and by a pretext of magic, fostered him in the belief of the common report, that he should one day be Emperor. However to please *Constantius*, he professed himself a zealous Christian †: yea, to make a greater shew, entered into a monastic life, suffered himself to be ordained reader in a Church, where he read the Scriptures to the people before the congregation, and join'd with his brother *Gallus* to erect a stately oratory to the memory of *St. Mamas* the martyr. But *Nazianzen* tells us ||, *That while Gallus's part of the Church went up prosperously, the Lord accepting it, as he did the sacrifice of Abel; while Julian's part could take no effect, the Lord rejecting it as he did Cain's oblation. In some places the foundations could not be laid,*

* Socrates Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 1.

† Sozomen lib. 5. cap. 2. Theodoret. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 2.

|| In *Julianum* orat. 1. pag. m. 593.

laid, the stones were thrown up again, and other places were immediately shattered and pulled down to the ground. Sometimes he could not forbear reasoning with his brother Gallus in defence of paganism. Indeed *Libanius* his great friend owns his hypocritical dealings, saying *, *He was obliged to dissemble; it broke his heart to see the Temples desolate, the sacrifices forbidden and neglected, altars and victims taken away, the priests banished, and the revenues of the Temples shared among the impure; and that it was not the desire of grandeur made him to affect the Empire, but to have opportunity to restore the worship of the gods.*

He left *Nicomedia*, and retired to some part of his paternal estate; and when he found the times dangerous, by the mediation of the Empress *Eusebia*, who always stood his friend, he got leave to retire to *Athens* †, under pretence to perfect his studies, but indeed to enjoy the company of philosophers, and pagan priests, and to consult more secretly about future events. And he wanted not enough of that tribe to attend him. Nay, he frequented the most celebrated oracles of *Greece*, and there was initiated in their solemn rites and mysteries. *Gregory Nazianzen* was wont to foretel what a course he would take, saying, *See what a mischief the Roman Empire nourishes in its own bowels ‡!*

His brother *Gallus*, who had been some years *Cæsar*, was about this time, for some treasonable innovations, put to death. But things going to wreck in *Gaul* and *Germany*, the Emperor *Constantius* was necessitated to think of another partner, the Empress *Eusebia*, who was *Julian's* constant friend, for which he praises her in an oration yet extant ||, whispered into his ear, “ That
“ none was so fit as *Julian*, he being a young man, of
“ an undesigning temper, wholly addicted to his books,
“ unacquainted with tricks of ambition. If success at-
“ tended his enterprizes, the glory would redound to the
Em-

* *Libanii epitaphium in Juliani necem*, pag. 265.

† *Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 3.*

‡ *Orat in Julianum 2.*

|| *Ἰουλιανὸς ἐγκώμιον πρὸς τὴν βασιλίαν Εὐσεβίαν*, operum *Juliani*, pag. 202, & seqq.

“ Emperor: if he miscarried and was cut off, they
 “ should be rid of him, and there would be none left of
 “ the royal family, to hatch any dangerous designs
 “ against the Empire.” He was then sent for to court.
 Before he left *Athens*, with prayers and tears he recommended himself to the care of *Minerva*, the tutelar goddess of that place *. Being invested with the title and ornaments of *Cæsar*, he was sent into *Gaul* with a retinue to whom he was a stranger, and there honourably received. He professed himself a Christian, and would sometimes, especially on the feast of Epiphany, go to the Christian Church, and offer up his prayers to God †. What he did otherwise was by stealth, rising at midnight, and doing devotions to *Mercury* ‡. *Eunapius* says ||, *He was sent into Gaul to be lost, but did, by the favour of the gods, possess the whole of Gaul, and no body knew that he was addicted to the worship of the gods.*

Julian's prosperous success in *Gaul*, where he overthrew the Barbarians, and vanquished seven German Kings, is at large narrated by *Ammianus Marcellinus*; and I need not trouble my reader with it, since it does not concern the subject I am upon. Only I may observe, that he so far gained the affections of the *Roman* legions, as they proclaimed him Emperor in the year of our Lord 360. He assumed the title, and wrote to *Constantius*, that it was a force imposed upon him by others, but if he pleased he was ready to lay it down again, and return to the capacity of *Cæsar*. *Constantius* told the Embassadors, That if *Julian* would secure his head from the vengeance due to such an insolence, he would not only quit that pretended title, but also the *Cæsarian* dignity, and returning to a private station, would refer the matter to his sovereign. *Julian* disdain- ing to do this, march'd his army to the east. He had long before this time, among his confidants, abjur'd Christianity; but his army being for the most part made up of Christians, he durst not yet publicly renounce it, and therefore came into the Church on *Christmas* day, and

* *Juliani Epistolæ ad S. P. Q. Atheniensem*, operum pag. 275.

† *Amm. Marcellinus*, lib. 21. pag. m. 553.

‡ *Ibid.* lib. 16. pag. m. 500. ¶ *De vitis Philosophorum*, pag. 97.

and did his devotions among the rest. But the better he secured his interest in the army, the more he opened his inclinations to paganism. All along his march he wrote to the great cities of the Empire, cunningly accommodating himself to their several humours and interests. Some of these letters are yet extant *. In that to *Maximus*, a pagan philosopher, he says more openly †, *That he would be glad to know that they publicly sacrificed to the Gods. He assured him that the army was of his Religion, and that in gratitude to the Gods several hecatombs had been already offered.* The pagans knowing his mind in too many places, and especially in *Greece*, began to open their temples, to trim them up, and to offer sacrifices. All which he encouraged by his counsel, direction and example. He arrived on the borders of *Illyricum* in harvest. When he came to *Dacia*, he heard the news that *Constantius* had died at *Mopsucrenæ*, in the confines of *Cilicia*, as he was coming with a great army to encounter him.

Julian being thus delivered from the fears of a rival in the Empire, marched with all speed to *Constantinople*, which he entered *December 11, 361* ‡. Having solemnized the funerals of *Constantius*, he began to let the world see what Religion he intended to espouse; for, as *Sozomen* || informs us, *he ordered the pagan temples to be set open, those that were decayed to be repaired; where new ones were wanting, he directed them to be built, the endowments of them he restored; he caused altars to be every where set up; he himself did publicly sacrifice, and shewed great honour to all that had any regard to that superstition; and, in a word, took care that the whole train of Gentile rites and ceremonies should be again brought in use.* And *Libanius* a pagan philosopher tells us **, *You could go no where, but you might behold altars and fires, blood, perfumes, and*
smoke,

* Inter opera Juliani Gr. Lat. edita Lipsiæ 1696.

† Ibid. Epistola 38. pag. 414.

‡ Ammian. Marcellini lib. 22. near the beginning.

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 3.

** Orat. in Juliani necem.

Cave's Introduction to the Lives of the Fathers, Cent. 4.

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smoke, and priests attending the sacrifices without fear or interruption. He assumed the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, and valued it as equal to that of Emperor *. He profaned and renounced his Baptism, by polluting himself with the bloody rites of paganism, which he opposed to the Christian method of initiation. Every morning he sacrificed to the Gods, and assisted at the public sacrifices; he wrote to the cities most devoted to *Gentilism*, promising to grant whatsoever they would ask. So great an example made the pagans in every place very insolent, so as they not only celebrated their sacrifices, but did also deride the Christians by all ways they could imagine †. He recalled the laws made against heathenish superstition by *Constantine* the Great and his sons, and confirmed those made by his pagan predecessors in favour of it. *Theodoret* says ‡, “ That at *Ascalon* and
“ *Gaza*, towns of *Palestine*, the heathens about this
“ time cut up the bellies of men in holy orders, and
“ of women that professed virginity, filled them with
“ wheat, and threw them to be meat to the swine;
“ and at *Sebasta* they opened the coffin of *John the Bap-*
“ *tist*, burnt his bones, and scattered his ashes.”

It seems agreeable to the design of this history to lay before the reader the means *Julian* used to restore Paganism and suppress Christianity, these being among the last efforts of this kind that Satan used to accomplish so wicked an end. First then, *Julian* set himself to reform paganism, and the professors thereof, from more gross corruptions, and to introduce many excellent constitutions he had observed among the Christians. The abominations of the *Gentiles* in their lives, and in their vile worship, had been exposed to the view of the world, and he found no way to regain credit to his Religion, but by cutting off what was offensive, and planting what was more useful in the room thereof. Therefore in a dif-

* Libanii Orat. 8. pag. 245.

† Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 5.

‡ Ibid. cap. 6.

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discourse of this Emperor, of which a part remains *,
“ He presses the magistrates to take care that men live
“ justly according to the laws, and express piety to God,
“ and humanity toward men ; be chaste and regular
“ in their persons ; that they entertain venerable ap-
“ prehensions of the Gods, approach their temples
“ with sanctity, adore their images and statues, as if
“ they beheld themselves present before their eyes.
“ For we are not, *says he*, to look on altars and images
“ as Gods, (the Gods being incorporeal, and needing no
“ sacrifices) but as symbols and representations of the
“ divine presence, and as means and instruments by
“ which we pay our adoration to them. That the
“ priests be honoured equally, or above the civil magi-
“ strates, as being the domestics of heaven. And
“ that the Priests themselves should not read such au-
“ thors as *Archilocus* and *Hipponax*, but should imitate
“ *Pythagoras*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Chrysippus*, or *Zeno*,
“ but beware of the *Epicurean* and *Pyrrhonian* opinions ;
“ that they give themselves to philosophic thoughts,
“ and to the duties of their office ; be seldom seen in
“ the *Forum*, or about houses of great men, and should
“ be chosen out of the best of men. The neglect of
“ these things, *says he*, will give opportunity to the
“ *Galileans*, by their singular humanity and charity,
“ to establish their pernicious party, and pervert the
“ honest-minded *Gentiles* to their Impiety.” Thus he
sought to reform paganism, and to bring it as near as
might be to the admirable methods, by which he per-
ceived Christianity had prevailed in the world. In imi-
tation whereof he designed and endeavoured to intro-
duce schools for the education of youth in every city † ;
Churches and altars of different degrees and privileges,
Lectures both of moral and speculative divinity, stated
times and forms of alternate Prayer, the use of anathe-
matism and penance, monasteries for devout and philo-
sophic persons of either sex, alms-houses and hospitals

D d 2

for

* Juliani fragmentum, operum pag. 288, & seqq. & epistola 49.
operum pag. 429. † Nazianz. Orat. 1. in Julianum. Sozomen.
lib. 5. cap. 16.

for the poor and cripple, and reception of strangers; and what he most admired, commendatory ecclesiastic epistles or letters testimonial from the governours of the Church, whereby persons travelling from one country to another, were, upon producing these letters, sure to meet with a kind entertainment. All which he commends in his letter to *Arsacius* *.

Secondly, He took all occasions of exposing Christians and their religion to ridicule. He was a man of a sarcastic wit, and he principally turned it that way. He read the scriptures for no other end but to censure them. If he met with a seeming contradiction, he made it real; if with an hyperbolical expression, he improved it to blasphemy. He derided the simplicity of the Apostles and Prophets, whom he represented as ignorant and illiterate fellows. In his *Persian* expedition, he wrote seven books against Christianity, which were afterward solidly answer'd by *Cyril of Alexandria*. When he spoke at any time of our Saviour, he would give him no other title than the son of *Mary*, or the *Galilean*; and by a particular law ordered the followers of our Lord not to be called Christians, but *Galileans* †. The imperial standard of the Cross, which his uncle *Constantine the Great* had made with so pious an intention, he took down, and in room thereof, put up another. In his own pictures and statues he represented *Jupiter* near him, coming down from heaven, and delivering to him the crown and the purple, the imperial ensigns ‡, and *Mars* and *Mercury* admiring him for his skill in war. His design in this was, that when his officers paid their respect to the imperial statue, they might at the same time worship idols, or that he might have the better occasion to punish their pretended contempt. His prime Ministers walked after his example: His uncle *Julian* entering a Christian Church at *Antioch*, pissed against the communion-table; and when *Euzorus* reproved him for so doing, he gave him a box on the ear. His Colleague *Felix* taking up the rich

* *Juliani Epist.* 49. *operum* pag. 429. & apud *Sozom.* ubi supra.

† *Nazian.* Orat. 1. in *Julianum*, *oper.* pag. m. 605.

‡ *Sozomen.* *Hist. Eccl.* lib. 5. cap. 17.

rich plate, which the Emperors *Constantine* and *Constantius* had bestowed upon the Church, said, *In what brave cups and vessels the Son of Mary is served?* But divine justice soon overtook these miscreants; *Julian's* bowels rotted within him, and his excrements flowed out at his profane mouth. His lady before his death brought him to such a sense of his sin, as he petitioned the Emperor in behalf of the Christians. As to *Felix*, his blood came out of his mouth, and in a day's time he vomited up his blood and his soul together, as is declared by *Theodore* ||.

Thirdly, He sought by all means to bring Christians low, and to weaken and destroy their power and interest: he banished them out of all places of honour and authority; he obliged them either to do sacrifice, or to quit their employment, and be incapable of civil offices *. Thus *Valentinian*, who was afterward Emperor, threw up his office as Colonel of one part of the guards of the palace, and submitted to banishment, rather than yield to idolatrous compliance. This Emperor ordered that no Christian should be a magistrate, nor capable to write testaments, nor transfer an inheritance †. He exacted unreasonable sums of money of them upon all occasions, that being impoverished, they might either lie under a strong temptation to Apostacy, or be secured from attempting any thing against the state. Thus when the *Arians* at *Edeffa* had fallen foul upon the *Valentinian* Heretics, he seized the treasures of that Church, which he bestowed upon his soldiers, and the lands he appropriated, and mocking them said ‡, *He would ease them of their burden, that they might go lighter to the kingdom of heaven: but, says he, if they provoke our humanity, by fighting and sedition, let them be punished for their insolence with sword, banishment and fire.* Under pretence of his designed war against the *Persians*, he heaped up treasures, imposing a heavy pecuniary mulct upon the heads of all those who refused to sacrifice to the Gods. The edict was executed with great severity. He set Christians upon quarrelling one with another, that they might do his work

Dd 3

with

|| Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 12, 13.

* Sozom. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 18.

† Juliani Epistola 43. operum pag. 424. ‡ Ibid. & Epistola 52.

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with their own hands. He understood the animosities between the *Arians* and the Orthodox, and studied to improve them to his own purpose. To this end, as soon as he came to the throne ||, he recalled the banished Bishops, and allowed them to return to their charges, possessed by those who he knew would not easily part with them. To gain himself the reputation of a wise and merciful Prince, he sent for the Bishops and their people to court, and pressed them to concord, that every one might peaceably enjoy the freedom of their own way. But his design was to increase their dissensions, that they might be capable of joining in any design, as even his own Historian *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a heathen, confesseth; adding *, *That he found no wild beasts so outrageous to mankind, as some Christians to one another.*

Fourthly, 'Tho' he himself abstained from open persecution, yet he connived at those who did persecute the Christians. He glories often how kind he had been to these Galileans †, beyond what they had met with from his predecessors. Instead of banishment, they had been sent home; instead of a prison, they enjoyed liberty; instead of being plundered, their confiscated goods had been restored to them by edicts. He observed that the Christians gloried in martyrdom, and crowded to it as bees to their hives; he would not then gratify them with that honour. But tho' no public warrants were issued, he left his officers to use their discretion in those places that were far from court. They understood their master's mind, and were not backward to use their authority and power. Several examples of this are upon record in *Theodoret's Church-History* ‡. They killed *Cyril*, a Deacon, who had broke some heathenish image in the Emperor *Constantine's* Reign, and after putting him to death, they eat of his liver. They acted a terrible tragedy on the person of *Marcus Arethusius*, a grave man, who had overturned a heathen temple, and destroyed images in that reign. He yielding himself to their bloody hands, they torment his body,

|| Sozomen. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 5. * Amm. Marcel. lib. 22. p. m. 564.

† Jul. Epist. 7. operum pag. 376. Epist. 52. pag. 436.

‡ Libro 3. cap. 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19.

body, cast him into a stinking privy, hang him up in a basket greased with honey, that the wasps and flies might torment him in the hot sun : yet he would not yield to any of their propofals, but gloried in his sufferings ||. *Capitolinus* Governour of *Thrace* caused *Æmilian* to be burnt. *Artemius*, an officer of *Egyptian* Soldiers, because in *Constantine's* Reign he had broke images, not only had his goods confiscated, but was also beheaded. *Publia* a noble woman, for finging, *The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of mens hands*, was cruelly beaten. Yea, not only content to abuse the living, their rage extended to the dead. Among others they digged up the bones of *John the Baptist*, buried at *Samaria*, called also *Sebasta*, and having mixed them with the bones of beasts, burnt them to ashes, and then scattered the ashes before the wind*.

Fifibly, He endeavoured especially to weary out and discourage the Bishops and Clergy with bad usage. *Julian* pretended †, the reason why he did so was, *lest they should stir up the people to sedition*. But it was rather to be rid of them, that by their absence, the people, being destitute of the Word and Sacraments, might be brought into ignorance and unconcernedness about religion, and capable to receive any impression. Take away the candle, darkness will follow. If the shepherd be smitten, the sheep will be scattered. To compass this more effectually, he seized their incomes ‡, took away their allowances of corn, repealed the laws in their favour, and made them liable to bear burdens in civil courts. When all this would not do, he removed them by fraud or force. Thus *Athanasius* being brought home to *Alexandria*, after the death of the Emperor *Constantius*, was obliged by *Julian* to leave it again. He had a particular spleen at this honest man, as appears by his letter to *Ecdicius* Governour of *Egypt*, which is yet extant, where he says ||, *Tho' you write nothing of others, yet be sure you ought to write of*

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Atha-

|| Nazianz. Orat. 1. in *Julian*. p. m. 610, 611.

* Theod. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 6. Rufini Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 28.

† Sozom. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 15. Jul. Epist. 52. pag. 436.

‡ Soz. lib. 5. cap. 5.

||| Jul. Epist. 6. operum pag. 376.

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Athanasius, *that enemy of the Gods, since you know our decrees against him. I swear by the great Serapis, that if before the Kalends of December, that enemy of the Gods Athanasius be not expelled, not only out of that city, but also out of all Egypt, you shall be adjudged to lose your troop, which is worth an hundred pound of gold.*—'Tis very uneasy to me, that by this man's industry, the Gods are contemned. I can bear nothing more to my pleasure, than that this wicked Athanasius is expelled out of all Egypt, who has had the confidence in my very reign, to allure some illustrious Greek Women (that is, Pagans) to baptism. The like orders he gave to the people of *Alexandria* *. Athanasius retired to shun the storm; but with undaunted courage said to his dejected flock, 'Tis but a little cloud, that will soon pass away †. At *Antioch* the Churches were shut up, the plate and treasures seized into the exchequer, and the clergy forced to fly. So was it done at *Cyzicum*, where there was not the least shadow of sedition. At *Bostra* he threatned *Titus* the Bishop, that if any mutiny happened ‡, he would lay the blame upon him and the clergy. When *Titus* wrote an Apology to court, assuring that the clergy lived peaceably, the Emperor wrote back to the city, *That their Bishop had made scurrilous reflections upon them, exhorting them || to expel him as a calumniator.* In many other places the clergy were cast into prisons, and exposed to pains and torture.

Sixthly, He gave all manner of assistance and encouragement to the *Jews* in contempt of the Christians; for he hated both. But when he found the *Jews* were like to be instruments to promote his purpose, he called for them, spoke tenderly to them, pitied their miserable and afflicted state, released the tribute put upon them, desired the help of their prayers in his *Persian Wars*, and wrote to them a kind letter yet extant **, in the end whereof he tells them, *This is what you ought principally to attend, that when I have successfully managed my Persian*

* Jul. Epist. 26. operum pag. 398. † Sozom. lib. 5. cap. 15.

‡ Ibid. || Ibidem.

** Juliani Epist. 25. pag. 396. Jul. fragmentum operum, pag. 295.

Perſian Expedition, and the holy city Jeruſalem, which you have ſo long and ſo earneſtly deſired to ſee inhabited, being rebuilt by my endeavours, I may dwell in it, and together with you, offer up our joint prayers to the ſupreme Being of the world. When the Jews told him the reaſon why they could not offer ſacrifices, was, *That the law had fixed theſe to a particular place at Jeruſalem, where their temple was ruined, and themſelves baniſhed*; he commanded them immediately to repair the temple, retrieve the cuſtoms of their anceſtors, and worſhip God according to the rites of their religion. This he did to allure them to his pagan ſuperſtition; or, if that failed, to evidence to the world that our Saviour was a falſe prophet, who had ſo expreſſly foretold the final diſſolution of that Church and State. The Jews were ſo glad of theſe orders, that they began to triumph over the Chriſtians, threatening to make them feel as terrible effects of their ſeverity, as ever they themſelves did feel by the Romans. When the news came abroad of rebuilding the temple, contributions were made by all hands: the very women ſold their ornaments and jewels to advance the work; what was wanting, the Emperor commanded to be furniſhed from his own treaſury. *Alypius* of *Antioch* was overſeer of the work; tradesmen were brought from all parts; all materials were made ready, and the work begun. *Cy- ril*, the Biſhop of *Jeruſalem*, minding *Daniel's* prophecy, and that of our Lord, told them, *That even now the time was come, that not one ſtone ſhould be left upon another*. The event juſtified his prediction; for when the builders had cleared the ground, a ſudden ſtorm aroſe, that carried away theſe vaſt heaps of rubbiſh, with a great quantity of lime and ſand prepared for the work. This was followed with a dreadful earthquake, which caſt up ſtones from the foundation, and overturned ſome adjoining houſes. Several perſons were killed, and others drawn out with broken legs and arms, almoſt bruised to death. When they attempted again to build, a fire ruſhed out upon them, that deſtroyed many, and ſcorched the reſt. Theſe miraculous interpoſals of providence brought over ſome Jews, who were baptized and admitted as members of the Chriſtian Church:

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Church: but the greater part continued in unbelief; *Julian*, like *Pharaoh*, hardened his heart. This is attested by the ecclesiastic historians*, and the substance of it is confirmed by the testimony of *Ammianus Marcellinus* a heathen†. *Sozomen* in particular, after rehearsing the fact, says‡, *If these things appear incredible to any, we are assured of them by those who heard it from such as were eye-witnesses, and are yet alive, and is confirmed both by Jews and Heathens, who left this work imperfect, being scarce well able to begin it.* I know *M. Basnage* a late author seems to question the truth of these miracles, or suspend his belief||, because the ecclesiastic historians give a different account of some circumstances in the affair. But in my humble opinion, the same learned author confirms the miracle from the *Jewish* Historians. “*R. David Gantz* affirms the temple was not built because of the sudden death of *Julian*, but *R. Gbedaliab Scalschelet Hakkabala* asserts, that this temple, rebuilt at a great expence, fell down; and that the next day a great fire from heaven melted the tools that remained, and destroyed an innumerable multitude of *Jews*. This confession of the Rabbins is the more considerable, because it is affrontive to the nation, and these Gentlemen are not wont to copy the books of Christians.”

Upon the whole, I see no reason to doubt the truth of this miracle, which is so fully, as to the bulk of it, confirmed by Christian, Heathen, and *Jewish* historians; and very good authors may differ as to the circumstances of a real fact. I have been the longer upon this passage, because it plainly proves, that what *Julian* designed to suppress Christianity, became a mean to advance it.

Seventhly, He endeavoured to suppress and extinguish all human learning among the Christians, well knowing how naturally ignorance opens a door to contempt, barbarism and impiety. *Julian* himself in one of his letters says**, *Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Thucydides, Isocrates,*

* Socrates, Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 20. Theodoret. lib. 3. cap. 20. Soz. lib. 5. cap. 22. † Ammian. Marcel. lib. 23. ab initio. ‡ Loco citato. || Basnage History of the Jews, Book 6. Chap. 14. pag. m. 546, 547. ** Epist. 42. operum pag. 423.

Isocrates, Lyfias, were instructed by the Gods, and own themselves sacred to Mercury and the Muses; wherefore 'tis absurd that those who expound such books should reproach the Gods which these authors worshipped.— If they conceive these authors had wrong opinions concerning the gods, let them go to the Churches of the Galileans, and interpret Matthew and Luke. Tho' he was a great Emperor, yet he humbled himself so far, as to be at pains to rifle and ruin the libraries of Christian bishops; for in his letter to Ecdicius, Governour of Egypt, he speaks thus * : *Some delight in horses, some in birds, others in wild beasts; but I from my infancy take pleasure in books.— Wherefore do me this favour, as to bring me all the books of George of Alexandria. He has many curious things in philosophy, in rhetoric, and concerning the impious doctrine of the Galileans, which I would have utterly extinguished: But lest the rest perish with them, seek out the whole; and make George's own library-keeper assist you. If he be faithful in doing this, I will reward him; if not, I will enquire into it. I knew George's books, when I was in Cappadocia, he gave me some of them to copy, which I afterward returned to him. In another letter to Porphyrius †, Julian orders him to send all that library to Antioch under the highest penalty, to take an oath of George's servants, that they had sequestred none of the books, and by force to compel them to produce them. To effectuate this design of extirpating human learning among Christians, he emitted the following law ‡, Professors of any art or science should excel in eloquence and good manners; and because I cannot be present in every city, I command that no teacher shall set up in any place, till by long exercise he is fitted for it, and after mature deliberation be found deserving of it by the court of the city; and that their decree be sent to me (that is, to the Emperor) for approbation. Theodoret tells us ||, that he discharged the children of Galileans from being taught poesy, rhetoric and philosophy: For, said he, we are killed by our own arrows; they take weapons out of our own books, whereby they fight against*

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* Epist. 9. operum pag. 377.

† Epist. 36. pag. 411.

‡ Codex Theod. lib. 13. tit. 13. l. 5.

|| Hist. Eccl. l. 3. cap. 8.

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us. This decree is called by *Ammianus Marcellinus*, a Heathen, a cruel edict, worthy to be covered with eternal silence †. He also endeavoured to casheer them out of the army. By these methods he designed to introduce rudeness and ignorance among the Christians, and thereby to dispose them to any impressions he might make upon them, that they might not be able to encounter the Heathen: But he could not hinder them from speaking truth, which is mighty, and will prevail.

Eighthly, Above all men he highly honoured and rewarded philosophers, and those who were most likely to refute Christianity. It grieved him to see so many excellent books writ in defence and explication of our religion. He wished the writings of these *Galileans* were banished out of the world ‡. He encouraged the sophists, philosophers and orators by pensions and privileges to write against them. He brought the most eminent of that tribe to court, as *Jamblichus*, *Libanius*, *Maximus*, *Ecebolius*, *Oribasius*, *Ædesius*, *Chrysanthius*, and others, whose lives are described by *Eunapius* ||, an author who frequently shews his spleen against the Christians, especially in the lives of *Ædesius* and *Maximus*, and in some other places of his book. Any body who reads *Julian's* letters to these philosophers, yet extant among his works, may see with what fondness of affection he writes to them, as his dear comrades, whom he would put all in his bosom. The truth is, if wit, learning or eloquence could have done it, he had driven our Religion out of the world. But the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Divine wisdom made foolish the wisdom of this world, and broke all his measures.

Ninthly, He used the most popular arguments he could think of, to persuade the world to return to Paganism. We may have a taste of these from his letter to the people of *Alexandria*, where he tells them **,
 “ Tho’ you had another founder of your city than
 “ *Alexander*, I could have expected that those who have
 “ transf-

† Lib. 22. pag. m. 571. *Inclomens, obruendum perenni silentio.*—

‡ Epist. 60. operum pag. 446. & Epist. 9.

|| De vitis Philosoph.

** Jul. Epist. 51. operum pag. 432.

“ transgressed the laws, and introduced new doctrines
 “ and opinions (meaning the Christians) should be pu-
 “ nished. Will you then make any requests for *Atha-*
 “ *nasius*? when *Alexander* built your city, and *Sera-*
 “ *pis* is your tutelar God, with *Isis* Queen of *Egypt*, a
 “ maid who assists him.—— I swear by the Gods, I
 “ am ashamed of you, people of *Alexandria*, that any
 “ among you should own himself a *Galilean*. The fa-
 “ thers of the *Hebrews* did serve the *Egyptians*, but you,
 “ who have conquer’d *Egypt*, (for your founder *Alexan-*
 “ *der* conquer’d it) how do you debase your selves to
 “ serve those who condemn the ancient opinions of your
 “ fathers? unmindful of the ancient happiness of your
 “ country, when the world had communion with the
 “ Gods of *Egypt*, and you lived in great abundance of
 “ all things. But those who have brought in this new
 “ religion, what good can they do to your city? Your
 “ founder *Alexander* the *Macedonian* was religious toward
 “ the Gods: so was *Ptolemy* the son of *Lagus*, who pro-
 “ tected this city. Did it grow by the preaching of
 “ *Jesus*, or by the hateful doctrine of the *Galileans*?
 “ When we the *Romans* took this city from the *Ptolemys*,
 “ *Augustus* came to it, and speaking to your citizens,
 “ said, *I pardon you all your faults, for the respect I bear*
 “ *to the great God Serapis, to this people, and great city.*
 “ To all which I may add, says *Julian*, the proofs you
 “ have of my kindness. Have you no sense of that
 “ bright sun that shines upon you, that makes summer
 “ and winter, grass and plants to grow? And of the
 “ moon that affords great advantages to your city?
 “ Dare you worship none of these Gods, but only
 “ must believe in *Jesus*, whom neither you nor your
 “ fathers knew?” These were the strongest arguments
 he could adduce for Paganism; but they were too weak
 to persuade a Christian People to renounce the service of
 the glorious God, who made sun, moon and stars, to
 whom we are reconciled through *Jesus* our blessed Re-
 deemer, and to embrace the worship of dumb idols, to
 serve devils to their own eternal destruction.

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Finally, He tried all subtle arts to insnare unwary Christians to comply with Pagan superstition, to raise horror in their conscience, or to undermine their reputation. To this end, he used to place the images of the Heathen Gods next to or behind his own, that when the people came, according to custom, to do obeisance to the one, they might do it to the other *. Those who did it, he persuaded to venture a little further. Those who discovered the cheat and refused, he charged with treason, and proceeded against them as delinquents. When the soldiers came at solemn times to receive their donatives, the ancient use was to throw a piece of frankincense into the fire, in honour to the Gods: which tho' the Christians detested, yet some surprized by an inveterate custom, did it; who being minded afterward of what they had done, horror seized their consciences; they went to the Emperor, and threw back their donatives, publicly professing themselves Christians, and desiring they might die, to give testimony to their religion. But he would not grant such the honour of martyrdom, only he expelled them from the palace and the army. At other times he used to defile the fountains and springs with heathen sacrifices, and sprinkle all the flesh and food in the market † with hallowed water offered to his Gods, that so the Christians could neither eat nor drink, but they must seem at least to be partners in idolatry. The Christians resented this with just indignation. *Juventius* and *Maximus*, two officers of the imperial guards, express'd to the Emperor's face a just dislike of his actions and of his Apostacy. *These are the things,* said they, *which we lament and complain of at home, and now in your presence as the great blemishes of your reign. We were educated in true piety under those excellent Princes Constantine and his Sons, and cannot but now be uneasy, when we see all places full of abomination, and our very meat polluted with filthy sacrifices.* *Julian*, notwithstanding his gravity and philosophic composure, was so nettled with this answer, that he commanded them to be first miserably tortured, and then

* Sozomen. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 17.

† Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 15.

then put to death ; tho' he would not have it thought they suffered as martyrs for religion, but for their petulant carriage to himself.

Seven or eight months *Julian* staid at *Constantinople*, using these methods to suppress Christianity, and restore Paganism. Having settled his secular affairs, he crossed the *Hellespont*, and came to *Pessinus*, a city of *Galatia* *, where stood an ancient temple dedicated to *Rhea*, or *Ceres* the Mother of the Heathen Deities ; the worship whereof he restored, and published an elegant oration, the work of one night †, to her praise. Thence he passed through *Cilicia*, and came to *Antioch*, *July Anno 362* ‡. He found the city almost wholly Christian, and the Pagan Rites generally neglected. However he went into the famous temple of *Apollo* in *Daphne*, upon its famous annual festival, where instead of great crouds and magnificent oblations which he expected, he found neither the one nor the other. He thought the people staid without, waiting his leave to come in : but the priest told him, *There was no body attending, and that the city had provided no manner of sacrifice. He had only there one poor goose, which he had brought from home to make an offering to the deity.* For these things, the Emperor sharply expostulated with the senate, telling them, *That they had but a penny for any public or private sacrifices ; but they suffered their wives to enrich the Galileans, and throw away their estates upon their poor.* He intended to consult the oracle about the success of his affairs ||. It was situate in a place called *Daphne*, in the suburbs of *Antioch*, where was a delicate place, thick set with cypress and other trees, which in the season afforded all manner of fruits and flowers, furnished with great variety of shady walks, joining their bushy heads, forbidding the approach of the sun to scorch those who recreated themselves there. It was watered with crystal fountains and rivulets ; a cool wind playing through the trees added a natural harmony,

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* Libanius in *Juliani necem*, pag. 254—300.

† *Juliani Oratio 5. in matrem Deorum, operum* pag. 254—300.

‡ *Juliani Misopogon, operum* pag. 362.

|| *Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 19.*

and delightful murmur : it was the usual scene of the poets amorous fancies, and such a temptation to intemperance and riot, as it was counted scandalous for a good man to be there. Here was a stately temple built by *Seleucus*, father to *Antiochus*, who built *Antioch*, dedicated to *Apollo Daphneus*, who had a costly image within the temple, whence oracles were wont to be given. When *Gal-lus*, *Julian's* Brother, was created *Cæsar*, he resided at *Antioch*, to secure the frontiers of the empire. He having a great veneration for the memory of Christian Martyrs, resolved to purge that place from the leud customs and pagan superstitions which had been there practised ; which he thought he could not do more effectually, than by building a Church over against *Apollo's* Temple, into which, so soon as finished and dedicated, he caused St. *Babylas's* coffin to be translated. The devil it seems liked not so near a neighbour, his presence striking him dumb *. *Julian* finding the oracle did give him no answer, notwithstanding his costly sacrifices, commanded the Christians to remove *Babylas's* Coffin ; and thereupon a great number assembled, who brought it into the city in a solemn triumph, singing, *Confounded be all they who worship graven images* †. Thus did God give a testimony of the vanity of the *Gentile Religion*, and a reproof to the infidelity of the Emperor. *Chrysostom* says ‡, *Julian was afraid to offer any indignity to the martyr's ashes, lest some immediate judgment should come upon him, as on his uncle Julian and Felix the treasurer ; of whom we have already heard* ||.

However, vexed with these hymns, he ordered *Sallust* the Prefect to persecute the Christians, and many were apprehended and cast into prison. Among the rest one *Theodorus* a youth ** was caught in the streets, and put on the rack, his flesh torn with iron pincers, he was scourged and beaten. When no torture could shake his constancy, he was at length dismissed. *Rufinus*, who wrote the eccle-

* Chrysostom. de S. Babyla, pag. 676.

† Socrat. lib. 3. cap. 18. Theodoret. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 10. Sozomen. lib. 5. cap. 19. ‡ De S. Babyla. || See above pag. 405.

** Socrat. lib. 3. cap. 18. Theodoret. lib. 3. cap. 11. Sozomen. lib. 5. cap. 20.

ecclesiastic history, afterwards asked this *Theodorus*, if in the midst of his tortures he felt any pain? He told him *, That at first he was a little sensible; but that one, in shape of a young man, stood by him, who gently wiped off the sweat from his face, refreshed him with cold water, and supported his spirit with consolations, so as his sufferings were pleasant to him. Heaven shewed displeasure at the proceedings of the Emperor; for while he was doing these things, the temple of *Apollo* in *Daphne* took fire, which in a few hours burned the sacred image, and reduced the temple, excepting the walls and pillars, to ashes †. The Christians ascribe this to divine vengeance, the *Gentiles* impute it to the malice of the Christians ‡; tho' the priests and wardens of the temple being racked to make them say so, could not be brought to say any more than, That it was fired by a light from heaven. *Libanius*, in an elegant discourse, bewails the unhappy fate of this sumptuous building ||: *Chrysostom* makes witty remarks upon it.

Julian's spleen was further raised against the people of *Antioch* upon this occasion; he had brought a train with him, enough to raise a scarcity, yet he cried down the price of all commodities below what they could be afforded at. The traders brought nothing into the markets, and a real famine ensued. This made the people mutiny, and according to the humour of the place they lampoon'd the Emperor with satyrical reflections, playing upon his long rough beard like a goat, that it was good for nothing but to make ropes of **. He at first vowed revenge, but in the mean time only repaid them with a tart satyr, called *Misopogon* ††, or, the *Beard-bater*; where he exposes the luxury, intemperance, and other vices of that people, That they were over-fond of X and K, Chi

* Socrat. lib. 3. cap. 18. Theodoret. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 10. Sozomen. lib. 5. cap. 19.

† Ibidem.

‡ A. Marcellinus, lib. 22. pag. m. 573. *Suspiciabatur enim id Christianos egisse, stimulos invidia.*

|| *Monodia supra Apollinis fanum igni exustum.*

** Socrat. lib. 3. cap. 17. Sozomen. lib. 5. cap. 19.

†† Extat in oper. Juliani, pag. 337 — 371. Edit. 1696.

Chi and Kappa, that is Christ and Constantine, and that their ill-ordered magistracy neglected the common-wealth.

Julian in his progress through the East, staid some time at *Cæsarea*, a populous city, where many Christians inhabited; who being zealous for their religion, had pulled down the temples of *Jupiter* and *Apollo*, and had lately destroyed the temple of *Fortune* dedicated to the public genius of the city*. This put him in a rage, so as to lose all his patience; he was displeased with the *Gentiles* of the place, that tho' few in number, they had not ventured their lives and fortunes in defence of these temples. *What matter*, said he, *tho' one Gentile had dispatched half a score of Galileans* †? He took away the charter of the city, reducing it to a village, not allowing it to bear the name of *Cæsar*; he seized on the revenues of the Church, both within and without the city, forcing the Christians by racks and torments to make a discovery, and commanded the sum of 300 pounds in gold, that is in our account 10800 *l. Sterl.* to be immediately paid to his exchequer, the clergy to be entred on the muster-roll, to serve as Militia under the governour of the province, and the common people to be put under tribute; swearing after all, *That unless these temples were immediately built, he would utterly destroy the place, and not suffer a Galilean to wear a beard on his shoulders.* Perhaps he had been as good as his word, had not death happily taken him off, at least *Basil* had run the hazard of going to the stake. *Nazianzen* expressly says, *They two had the honour of the Cyclops, to be reserved last to punishment, that upon Julian's triumphant return from Persia, they might fall a victim to his deities* ‡. While he lay at *Cæsarea*, he sent parties up and down the country to eject Bishops, and take possession of their Churches; one part of them came to *Nazianzum*, where the commander peremptorily required the Church, that the elder *Gregory* had not long before built, to be delivered to him: but the good old man stoutly opposed him, daily assembling

* *Sozomen. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 4.*

† *Nazianz. in Julian. Orat. 1. pag. m. 612.*

‡ *Nazianz. pag. m. 651. Orat. 2. in Julian.*

bling the people to public prayers; and in the issue the officer, for his own safety, was fain to retire, and surcease his command.

Julian departed from *Antioch* with his army in the beginning of *March*. At his going he let the people know how much he resented the affronts done him, and by a fatal prognostication said he should see them no more. *Libanius*, to reproach them, asked a Christian School-master *, *What the carpenter's son was now doing?* thus deriding our Saviour. The man replied, *The God who made the world, whom you mock, is making a coffin for your master Julian.* The Emperor marched on to *Edeffa*, but would not enter the city, because it was all inhabited by Christians. He came to *Carræ* a city in *Mesopotamia*, April 18. where he entred the Pagan Temple, and performed many secret execrable rites; which being finished, he sealed up the doors, and set a guard on them, giving orders that none should open them till his return. When they were broke open upon the news of his death, there was found a woman hanging by the hair of the head, her hands extended, and her belly ript up, that a presage of success might be had by inspecting her liver †. The like seems to have been done at *Antioch*, where many chests were found in the palace filled with dead mens skulls, and several dead bodies hid in the wells; which were no doubt the engines and monuments of his diabolic divination.

In the middle of summer, he came within sight of the *Persian* Army, and had a hopeful prospect of victory; when venturing too far, without his armour, he was on a sudden struck with a horseman's lance ‡, which grazing on his arm, passed in at his side, and went to the lower lap of the liver. The lance being two-edged, he cut his fingers while he strove to pull it out; and fainting with the loss of blood and spirits, he sunk down on his horse's neck. 'Tis reported by *Theodoret* ||, That *Julian* finding him-

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self

* *Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 23.*

† *Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 26, 27.*

‡ *A. Marcellinus, lib. 25. pag. m. 601.*

|| *Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 25.*

self mortally wounded, took a handful of his blood, and throwing it up into the air, cried, *Thou hast overcome, O Galilean!* Sozomen says *, *He threw up his blood into the air, as looking to Christ, and accusing him as author of his death.* His wounds being found dangerous, he was laid on a target, and carried into his tent, where he died about midnight, June 26. A.D. 363, in the 32d year of his age, when he had not reigned full two years. Libanius ought not to have reproached the Christians as killing him by treachery †, which calumny Sozomen refutes ‡. Even Ammianus Marcellinus, a Pagan, who was present at the fight, says ¶ 'tis uncertain who did it; and Eutropius another Pagan, and at that time also in the battle, says, *Hostili manu interfectus est* **, he was killed by the hand of an enemy. He was a Prince superstitious rather than religious, of a nimble satyrical wit, loved to talk much, affected to be flattered, was skilled in profane learning, diligent in his studies, so as when he had employed the day in business, he would spend the night in reading and writing. He defended Paganism, with his sword and with his pen. To give him his due, had not his memory been stained with Apostacy from the best religion that ever was, and with an implacable hatred to the Christians, he had been one of the best Princes that ever managed the Roman Empire. Even Eutropius says ††, *He was too great a persecutor of the Christian Religion, yet so as to abstain from blood:* which last part is not altogether true. In the good providence of God, his death restored health and safety to the Christian World. Had he returned victorious from the Persian expedition, the Christians might have felt the utmost effects of his severity, for it was what he threatned; and if he had prolonged his reign many years, he might have reduced Christianity to a very low ebb in all human appearance. 'Tis no wonder then if Christians entertained the news of his death with triumph and joy; their Churches were filled with

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hymns

* Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 2.

† Libanius in Juliani necem, pag. 324.

‡ Lib. 6. cap. 2.

¶ Lib. 25. pag. m. 601.

** Eutrop. lib. 10. §. penult.

†† Ibid. *Nimius Christiana Religionis infectator, perinde tamen ut cruore abstineret.*

hymns and thanksgivings, and their houses with great feasts and rejoicings. At *Antioch* the people insulted *Maximus* the philosopher and magician, who had blown up *Julian* in his folly and cruelty, crying out, *What is now become, O thou foolish Maximus, of all thy oracles and divinations? God and his Christ have overcome* *.

Upon *Julian's* death, *Jovian* was by the suffrage of the army saluted Emperor. He was *Primicerius* of the domestical protectors, or Captain-General of the imperial guard, a resolute Christian. For when *Julian* published an edict †, That the army should either sacrifice, or disband, he offered to lay down his commission: but the Emperor knowing him to be a person too valuable to be easily parted with, ordered him to continue his command.

Upon the acclamations of the soldiers saluting *Jovian* Emperor, he told them, *That for his part he was a Christian, and could not take upon him the command of an army, trained up in the principles of the deceas'd Emperor; he could not expect the divine protection, or any success by their arms.* To this they almost unanimously replied ‡, *You shall reign over Christians; the eldest of us were trained up under the discipline of Constantine, those that are next in order, under the instructions of Constantius; as for the late Emperor, his reign was so short, it could not make any deep impressions upon the minds of men.* On this assurance he took the government upon him, and made peace with the *Persians* on the best terms his circumstances could afford. *Eutropius* says ||, *It was a necessary, but dishonourable peace, having delivered up some part of the empire, which no man ever did for 1118 Years before; that is, from the building of Rome or foundation of that monarchy.* But I am concerned now to account for the Propagation of Christianity, and Overthrow of Paganism, not the affairs of the empire, which by *Julian's* unwary expedition

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* Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 3. cap. 27, 28.

† Socrat. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 22.

‡ Theodoret. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 1. Socrat. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 22.

|| Breviarium Rom. Hist. lib. 10. cap. ult.

dition against *Persia*, were put into confusion, and this peace made necessary.

Indeed the grief of the *Pagans* for the death of *Julian*, was doubled by the election of *Jovian*, whose zeal for Christianity they were too well assured of; and therefore in all places they traduced him with lampoons and satyrs *. He began his reign with the care of religion, and wrote immediately to the governours of the provinces over the empire, to open the Churches, and diligently attend the solemnities of divine worship, and let his subjects know, that the Christian Religion was the only way of salvation. He restored to the several Churches the gifts and revenues, and to the clergy their privileges and immunities which *Julian* had taken from them †; particularly he restored the yearly allowance of corn which *Constantine* the Great had settled upon the Church; but because a dearth and scarcity then raged, he was obliged to cut off two thirds of that allowance, promising to restore it as soon as the famine was over ‡. He also recalled all the Bishops and other ecclesiastic persons who had been banished for their religion, and particularly *Athanasius* ||. He supported the *Homo-ousian* or Orthodox Faith, and ordered the canons of the council of *Nice* to be observed **, the pagan temples to be shut up, and the public sacrifices to be taken away; whereupon the priests crept into corners, and the very philosophers were so frightened, that they laid aside the *Pallium*, and wore the common habit ††; yet he kindly entertained the philosophers wherever he came; and by an edict gave every man leave to serve God in his own way ‡‡, which is to be understood not of the public, but of the private exercise of religion. The *Gentiles* were now under the hatches, and all their cry is for gentleness and moderation, leaving men to the liberty of their conscience |||: but this would not pass with them; when they had the upper-hand,

* Suidas in voce *Ιοβιανος*. † Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 4.

‡ Theod. ubi supra. || Theod. lib. 4. cap. 2.

** Socrates, Hist. lib. 3. cap. 24. †† Ibidem.

‡‡ Themistius, Orat. 12. pag. 278.

||| Libanius de templis, & in *Juliani* necem, pag. 290.

Chap.4. *The Death of the Emperor Jovian.* 423

hand, then they tempted the Christians to Apostacy by barbarous severities. The Emperor also emitted a * law, whereby it was made a capital crime to ravish the consecrated virgins, or to attempt to marry them. This seems to have been occasioned by the looseness of the late times, when many of these virgins had been seduced to such leud practices. This law bears date *February 19.* and the year of the consuls coincides with the 364th of the Christian *Æra*.

This good Emperor died soon after, in his return from *Antioch* to *Constantinople*, at *Dadaстана* a village in the confines of *Galatia* and *Bitbynia*, having supped on poisonous mushrooms, or being choaked with the smoak of coals, or the damp of a new-plastered room †. However, he was found dead on his bed, after he had reigned not full eight months, in the 33d year of his age. He was a valuable Prince, whose reign, if it had been longer, would have probably rendred the condition both of Church and State very prosperous. *Theodoret* has this reflection upon this event ‡, *The great God shews us good things, and for our sins soon takes them away, to discover how great mercies he is ready to give, and how unworthy we are of them, that he may thus engage us to a better and more holy life.*

The army marched to *Nice*, and there elected *Valentinian* Emperor. He was a tribune of the *Salarii*, a man of spirit and courage, who had suffered for his religion under *Julian*. Upon this occasion, by virtue of his office he was bound to attend the Emperor, when he went to offer sacrifice in the temple, where the priests stood ready at the door, with branches in their hands, to sprinkle holy water on those that entred in: some drops thereof fell on *Valentinian*, who struck the priest a box on the ear, in the Emperor's presence, counting himself polluted, not purged by that lustration, and tearing off that part of his garment, upon which the water had

E e 4

fallen,

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 9. tit. 25. l. 2.

† Sozomen. lib. 6. cap. 6. Socrates, lib. 3. cap. ult.

‡ Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 4.

fallen, threw it away. *Julian* raged to see his Religion affronted, yet not willing to give *Valentinian* the honour of martyrdom, found another fault with him, and banished him to *Melitena*, a desolate town in *Armenia*. This is attested by the ecclesiastic historians who wrote about that time*. He returned in the beginning of *Jovian's* reign. Upon his election, messengers were immediately dispatched to *Ancyra*, to carry him the welcome news, and conduct him to *Nice*, where the soldiers proclaimed him Emperor; withal requiring that he would take a partner into the Empire. He answered, *It was in your power, gentlemen, to make me Emperor; but being so, it is my part to command.* However, within a month he assumed his brother *Valens* to be his Colleague: *Which*, says *Theodoret* †, *I wish he had not done; but his errors in doctrine were not then known.* To his brother he allotted *Asia* and *Egypt*, reserving the Empire in *Europe* to himself. To make their Government acceptable in the beginning thereof, they emitted a general toleration, enacting ‡, *That every one might worship God according to the rite of that Religion wherein they had been educated, and that no man should be compelled to this or that way of worship, but all left to a free and unconstrained choice; and that divination by sacrifices should not be hindered.* They are sufficiently cried up by pagan writers, for this ||: But the Christians complain**, that under *Valens*, in the East, the *Bacchanalia*, and Feasts of *Ceres* were openly kept, the priests running like mad-men through the country, and that he was only an Enemy to the orthodox observers of the apostolic doctrine. Indeed *Valens* supported the *Arian* party, and oppressed the asserters of the orthodox doctrine of the council of *Nice*; but to explain this, is not my present business.

This general toleration to both Christians and Pagans, the Emperors by degrees began to restrain, with respect
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* Socrates, lib. 4. cap. 1. Sozom. lib. 6. cap. 6. Theodoret. lib. 3. cap. 16. lib. 4. cap. 5. † Theodoret. lib. 4. cap. 5. ‡ Cod. Theodosii, lib. 9. tit. 16. lege 9. || Am. Marcellinus, lib. 30. pag. m. 665. Symmachus, lib. 10. epist. 54. ** Theod. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 24.

to the latter. For by a law published in the first year of their reign *, they seized the farms and revenues belonging to the heathen temples. They had been taken away by *Constantine* and his sons, but restored by *Julian*, and were now annexed to the Emperor's private patrimony. By another law, they prohibit night sacrifices †, charms and magic divinations, and ordered, that every person convicted thereof should be punished. They took care, that no Christian, under any pretence whatsoever ‡ should be condemned to the gladiatory sports, as dishonourable to the Christian name. Whereas the Gentiles were now fain to guard their temples by soldiers to prevent their being insulted, the Emperors ordered, *That no judge or officers should command Christians upon that service* ||, under pain of losing life and estate. These laws are directed to *Symmachus* the Provost of *Rome*, and are judged to bear date *A. D.* 365.

By these proceedings pagan superstition declined apace; but they used all the arts they could, to keep up the spirits of their sinking party: they improved the public toleration as far as possible; and since *Valens* heartily espoused and spent the strength of his severity against the Catholics, that is, the supporters of the doctrine of the council of *Nice*, in opposition to *Arius*, the Pagans grew every day more bold and impudent, till he was forced to make it capital for any, either in public or private, by night or by day, to exercise any art of divination, or consult them that did so. The occasion of the law was thus: The most eminent pagan philosophers at that time were grieved at the flourishing state of Christianity, and propagation thereof: they grew weary of *Valens's* government, and longed for an Emperor of their own Religion **; they secretly confederated with some great persons at court, and officers of the army, and tried by methods of divination who was like to succeed him in the Empire. To this end a wooden *Tripod*,
made

* Cod. Theod. lib. 10. tit. 1. l. 8.

† Ibid. lib. 9. tit. 16. l. 7, 8.

‡ Ibid. tit. 40. l. 8.

|| Ibid. lib. 16. tit. 1. l. 1.

** Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 6. cap. 35. Socrates, lib. 4. cap. 19. Amm. Marcellinus, lib. 29. pag. m. 645. & sequentibus.

made of Laurel, was prepared and consecrated with magic charms, and placed in the middle of a room perfumed with *Arabian* spices : the charger on which it was set, had on the brim the twenty four letters of the alphabet ; a person came in cloathed in linen, and shaked a magical ring hanging on a curtain about the end of the charger ; the letters which the ring presented or pointed out, were ΘΕΟΔ, whereupon those who stood by, said the oracle intended *Theodorus*, a learned man of quality, but a pagan, whom they desired to be advanced to the Empire. The whole affair being discovered to the Emperor, he, in astonishment and passion, ordered strict inquiry to be made into it. *Theodorus* was beheaded, the maker of the *Tripes* burnt alive, and the rest concerned in the consult were exquisitely tortured ; whose tortures and severe usage may be seen at large in *Ammianus Marcellinus* *. All pagan philosophers who came to hand, were sure to be executed. *Valens* the Emperor, who was always cruel, became in this case outrageous, a fringed cloak being then a sufficient evidence of a magician and conjurer. *Maximus*, *Julian's* master, a celebrated philosopher, (to whom the Emperor owed an old grudge, for an affront done him in *Julian's* time,) being now charged as privy to the plot, was carried to *Ephesus*, the place of his nativity, and there beheaded †. Above others, his fury was provoked against such whose names began with these four letters Θ, Ε, Ο, Δ, whether called *Theodorus*, *Theodotus*, *Theodosius*, *Theodolus*, or the like, these he caused to be put to death wherever they were found. Many changed their names, to avoid the danger. Yet God ordered the great *Theodosius* to escape the danger, and succeed in the empire, as an useful instrument to overthrow Paganism, and promote the good of the Christian Church. *Valens* also ordered books of magic, or any other curious and unlawful art, to be searched for ; which being piled upon heaps, were publickly burned. *Ammianus Marcellinus* says ‡,

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* Ibidem.
mi, pag. m. 106.

† Eunapius de vitis Philosophorum, in vita Maximi, pag. m. 646.

‡ Lib. 29. pag. m. 646.

so great terror then seized men, that many in the eastern provinces did burn their libraries.

In the west *Valentinian* carried toward the pagans with a more easy hand. He granted * the provincial priests, who superintended a whole province, that they should be free from the burden of civil offices, and enjoy the same privileges with persons of quality, not to be racked or tortured, and to have the dignity conferred upon them as the reward of their care. The time when this law was enacted, appears by the date of the consuls, to coincide with June 27. A. D. 371. He also took care about the players, who acted at the public sports and theatres, a trade forbidden by the canons of the Church, that † in case of imminent danger of death, they might, upon their repentance and earnest desire, be admitted to the sacraments, that is, to Baptism and the Eucharist, provided this was done by allowance of the presidents of the Church, and inspection of the civil magistrate.

About the year 372, *Mavia* Queen of the *Saracens*, a people who then inhabited those parts of *Arabia* which lie next to *Egypt*, being at war with the *Romans*, and like to be very troublesome, an embassy was sent to her for peace; which she accepted, upon condition they would ordain and send *Moses*, who lived a monastic life in the neighbourhood, a man famous for miracles and piety, as a bishop to her country. This being easily agreed to, *Moses* is sent for to *Alexandria*, where he refused to be ordained by *Lucius*, whom the *Arians* had thrust into that See, soon after the death of *Athanasius*, saying, *His hands were polluted by the blood of the saints*. He therefore betook himself to the catholic bishops who lived in exile, and having from their hands received ordination, he went to the *Saracens* country, the greater part whereof he converted to the profession of the Christian faith. This work was afterward carried on to greater perfection, when *Zocomos*, one of the heads of the principal tribes, was baptized, and brought over his people to the faith, after the birth of a Son, which

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* Codex Theod. lib. 12. tit. 1. lib. 75.

† Ibid. lib. 15. tit. 7. l. 1.

a religious monk assured him he should have, if he would embrace Christianity. The ecclesiastic historians have all the substance of the story *, but *Sozomen* most fully.

Christianity made a further progress among the northern nations, especially with the *Goths*, who then dwelt upon the river *Danow*: for *Phritegernus*, one of their Princes, having by the assistance that *Valens* lent to him, gained a considerable victory against *Athanasius*, another of the Princes, he, in gratitude to the Emperor, and as a firm mark of his friendship, entertained the Christian Religion among his people †. The *Arians* being at this time the only powerful faction at court, took this opportunity to introduce their own opinions among the *Goths*, tho' they had taken root there some time before, by means of *Uphilas* their Bishop, who was the first that is said to have found the *Gothic* letters, and translated the Bible into their language.

In the mean time, *Valens* miserably harassed the orthodox defenders of the doctrine of the council of *Nice* against the *Arians*, pursuing them with incredible violence. *Themistius*, a pagan philosopher, did plead their cause before the Emperor, saying ||, *His Highness must not think much of the difference of opinions among Christians: it was very inconsiderable if compared with the multitude and confusion of opinions among the Gentiles, which were above 600. Perhaps God was delighted with such a variety of sentiments, since it tended to beget in the minds of men a greater reverence of the Divine Majesty, when they found the knowledge of these things so deep, as no human capacity could comprehend it.* The Emperor was so far softened by this discourse, that he changed the punishment of men in sacred office from death to banishment.

Valentinian died in the West, November 17. A. D. 375. 'Tis said of him, that he was a Prince of great parts, but his anger was almost a madness; as appears by some of the last passages of his life. For the *Sauromatæ* having

* Socrates, lib. 4. cap. 36. Theod. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 23. Rufin. lib. 2. cap. 6. Sozomen, lib. 6. cap. 38.

† Sozomen. lib. 6. cap. 37. Socrates, lib. 4. cap. 33.

|| Apud Socratem in Hist. Eccl. lib. 4. cap. 32.

having made incursions into some parts of the Empire, and being informed of the preparations he made against them, they sent an embassy for peace *. He was surprised at the Embassadors mean appearance ; but when he understood they were the most noble men which that nation could afford, he cried, *The condition of the Romans was very unhappy, to be troubled with the rebellion of so unworthy a people ;* and did fall into such a rage, as the violence of his passion broke an artery in his body, of which he soon died, having reigned eleven years and some months. *Valens* survived scarce three years †, being defeated by the *Goths*. His men on their flight put him in a little cottage, to which the enemy set fire and burnt him, and those that were with him, in the 50th year of his age, and of our Lord 378. His reign for the most part was indulgent to the Pagans, and severe to Catholic Christians.

Upon the death of these two brothers, the government rested in the hands of the two sons of *Valentinian* ; *Gratian*, who had already reigned twelve, and *Valentinian junior*, who had reigned three years, they being admitted when very young to bear the title of Emperors. *Gratian* being attacked by the *Goths* and *Germans*, and having little assistance from his brother, who was but about ten years of age, found himself obliged to take in a partner for the eastern Empire. The person elected was *Theodosius* a Spaniard, son to an excellent officer of that name, whom *Valens* put to death in *Africa*, tho' he had delivered him from the Tyranny of *Firmus*. He had already given great proofs of his conduct and valour. Every body approved the choice, and he was invested with the purple at *Sirmich*, in the 43d year of his age, A. D. 379.

The Gentiles had enjoyed the peaceable exercise of their Religion for a considerable time, having met with little or no interruption since the reign of *Constantius*, that is, for about the space of twenty years. The first two

* Sozomen. lib. 6. cap. 36. † Ibid. cap. 40. Socrates, lib. 4. cap. 38. Amm. Marcel. lib. 31. pag. m. 678, 679.

two years of *Theodosius's* government being almost wholly taken up with wars, wherein he routed the *Goths* in *Thracia*, and other enemies to the Empire, the Pagans then had their temples open, and the freedom of their old rites and ceremonies, so as many began to return to their old superstitions. Others meeting with cruel usage in the reign of *Valens*, when the persecution against the orthodox was carried on by the joint concurrence of *Arians*, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, took shelter in their old Religion, in so far as the Emperor found it necessary to restrain this wicked practice by a law, dated *A.D.* 381 *, That they who apostatized from Christianity to Paganism, should lose all power of making a Will, which was ever counted the great privilege of a *Roman*, so as none of his friends could be the better for any thing he left behind him ; which *Theodosius* and *Valentinian II.* explained and ratified by many subsequent acts, extending it to particular persons and things †. About the end of the same year he prohibited ‡, *under pain of proscription, all divinatory sacrifices, either by day or by night, and that none should approach the temples for any such purpose ; adding, That God is to be worshipped with pure and chaste prayers, not with execrable charms and conjurations.* The Christians improved these laws, so as temples both in city and country were assaulted ; and *Zosimus* complains ||, *That the Pagans were not able to lift up their eyes to the heavens, and pay their devotion to the planets, without danger of their heads.* Among the rest there was a curious *Pantheon* richly adorned with abundance of statues and images of the Gods, in the province of *Osroene* at *Edeffa*, that was shut up : but upon the Gentiles complaint at court, representing the city was thereby prejudiced, who were wont there to keep their public meetings and annual festivals, wherein they offered up prayers for the safety of the life of the Emperor, it was granted that it should stand open for these uses, and the Images should remain by way of ornament,

* *Cod. Theod.* lib. 16. tit. 7. l. 1.

† *Ibidem*, lib. 2, 3, 4.

|| *Zosimus*, lib. 4. pag. 758.

‡ *Ibidem*, tit. 10. l. 7.

ornament, but that no sacrifices should be offered in it*.

In the West *Gratian* was zealous against the Pagans. He refused the pontifical habit, and the title of *Pontifex Maximus* †, tho' that title is sometimes given him in ancient inscriptions. But he was soon after this murdered by the tyrant *Maximus*, who was afterward defeated by *Theodosius*, and his head cut off.

The following year *Symmachus* a Pagan was made Provoost of *Rome*. Soon after his election he framed an address to the Emperor, where, with all the subtilties of wit and eloquence, he did plead the cause of his religion before *Valentinian II.* beseeching him to restore their ancient rites, and particularly that the altar of victory, which was placed in the Capitol, as some say, or rather in the Senate-house, and being moveable, was carried wherever the senate assembled, being taken away by the preceding Emperors, might be restored; and that the salary formerly allowed the vestal virgins, who were seven in number, might be returned, and that it might be lawful for any to bestow what legacies they pleased upon them. This address was happily encountered, answered and baffled by the eloquent and learned *Ambrose* bishop of *Milan*. The papers are too long to be here inserted, but may be seen in *Ambrose's* works ||, and are handsomely englished by *Dr. Cave* ‡.

The Pagans in the East, notwithstanding the laws to the contrary, could not be restrained from tampering with *Aruspices*, *Augurs*, *Magicians*, and the rest of that tribe; which obliged *Theodosius* to quicken the execution of the law, by making it capital for any person, either upon any present occurrence, or for knowing any future event, to consult divinatory sacrifices**. The rescript is directed to *Cynegius* the *Prætorian Præfect* in the East, to whom the Emperor committed the care of abolishing Paganism in those parts ††, and particularly in
Egypt,

* Cod. Theodosii, tit. 10. l. 8. † Zosimus, lib. 4. pag. 761.

|| Ambrosii operum tom. 2. epist. 30. pag. m. 113, ——— 121.

‡ Life of Ambrose, pag. 375, ——— 390.

** Cod. Theod. lib. 16. tit. 10. l. 9.

†† Zosimus, lib. 4. pag. 762.

Egypt, whither he sent him *A. D.* 387, empowering him to shut up or demolish the Heathen Temples. Tho' *Cynegius* made some progress, yet he left the main work imperfect, dying next year. But the design was carried on, and *Theophilus* bishop of *Alexandria* was very zealous for it.

There was at *Alexandria* an ancient and famous Temple dedicated to *Serapis*, whom some take to be the same with *Pluto*, and how this idol was brought to *Alexandria* at first, we have a more full account in *Tacitus* *; which Temple is described by *Rufinus* †, and other ecclesiastic historians ‡, as one of the most rich and magnificent in the world. *Eunapius* a Pagan says ‡, *It was one of the finest in the universe, to which an innumerable multitude from all parts of the earth did resort.* This Temple, *Theophilus* had begged of the Emperor, designing to turn it to a Church. His desire being granted, workmen were employed to clear the rubbish, who found many dark vaults and cellars, the secret receptacles of the hidden rites and mysteries of Paganism, out of which they brought many obscene and detestable *Priapus's*, and other abominable images, which they publickly exposed to the scorn and derision of the people. This provoked the *Gentiles* beyond measure, so as they gathered into a body; and tho' they were the lesser number, yet armed with rage and fury, they broke in upon the Christians, wounded many, killed others, and flying to the temple garrison'd themselves in it. They had taken some Christians prisoners, whom they forced to do sacrifice, or upon their refusal put them to death with new and exquisite tortures. The party was headed by *Olympius*, a pretended philosopher. Several essays were made by the magistrates to bring them to reason, but in vain; nothing was heard out of the temple but a confused noise. The magistrates were forced to send an account of what had happened to the Emperor, which frightened the Pagans, and made
several

* Taciti Annalium lib. 4. cap. 83, 84.

† Rufin. lib. 2. cap. 22, 23.

‡ Theodoret. lib. 5. cap. 22. cap. 16. Sozomen. lib. 7. cap. 15.

‡ De Vitis Philosophorum, pag. m. 72.

several of them run to lurking-places, as *Helladius* and *Ammonius*, by whom *Socrates* says he was taught letters when very young*. *Theodosius*, according to the sweetness of his nature, reply'd, *As for the Christians who had been killed in the scuffle, they were happy, being crowned with martyrdom. As to their murderers, he resolved to pardon them, hoping that so much clemency might become an effectual argument for their conversion. But the temples which had been the occasion of this disorder, should be pulled down to the ground, and had directed Theophilus to see his orders obeyed.* The Christians entertained this letter with acclamations; the *Gentiles* dispersed. Then *Theophilus*, accompanied with Monks, assisted by the *Augustal Præfect*, and some of the *Roman* army, set about the execution of his orders. The temple they wholly demolished. In the walls they found hieroglyphics, which some Christians said were the sign of the cross, and others, that when these were found the temple would come to an end†. Many of the Pagans abandoned their idols, and embraced Christianity. Within the circumference of the great building, stood a chappel supported by rich marble pillars; the walls were overlaid with gold, and that defended by a cover of brass. In this chappel stood the image of *Serapis*, so large, as with one hand he touched the one, and with another he covered the other side of the temple, with many rich devices to delude the people. They had a tradition, that if any man did but touch the image, the earth would immediately open, the heavens be dissolved, and all things go to confusion. But a Christian soldier, not fearing the prediction, with a halbert cut down the jaws of the image, and found no other dreadful effects ensue than an army of mice, which did fly out at the breach. Then they cut him limb from limb, and burnt him in the streets of the city, and his trunk with solemnity in the amphitheatre. *Eunapius* laments the fate of this place, and says ||, *The demolishing*

* *Socrates*, Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 16. † *Ibid.* cap. 17.

|| *De vitis Philosophorum*, pag. m. 73, 75.

lishing thereof in the reign of Theodosius, was like what the fables report of the giants fighting against the Gods.— He blames the Monks, who counted it religion to destroy those holy places, saying, They appeared men, but lived like hogs. These reflections shew the grief of the Pagans for the loss of their idols. The time was now come that the Prophet Isaiah speaks of ||, That a man shall cast his idols of silver and gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, and the idols he shall utterly abolish.

The mother temple being thus out of the way, the rest followed more easily. The Pagan temples and images at *Alexandria* being overturned, the folly and impiety committed by the priests about them was laid open. One instance thereof is remarkable. *Tyrannus*, a priest of the temple of *Saturn*, famous for giving oracles, had his temple frequented by persons of the best rank. When he had a mind to corrupt any of their wives, he would tell the husband, it was the pleasure of the Gods his wife should come and spend that night in devotions at the temple. The lady *being dressed to advantage, and night being come, the doors were lock'd fast upon her; and while she was intent upon her devotions, the priest by secret conveyances crept into the old worm-eaten image of *Saturn*, through which he spake to her as if it had been the God himself: And having thus prepared her, by unseen cords put out the lights, and then coming forth seized upon the affrighted lady, and drew her into leud embraces. This trade he had driven many years, till meeting with a chaste lady, who knew him by his voice, she abhorred the fact, and went home and complained of the villany to her husband, who discovered the same. *Tyrannus* being convicted, confessed the crime, and received condign punishment. The whole scene of adulteries, incests and bastards being laid open, turned to the reproach of Paganism; and their temples with their idols were brought to a shameful end.

These

|| Isa. ii. 18,—20.

* Rufini Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 25.

These ruined temples were generally turned into churches. Out of that of *Serapis* was built on the one side a *Martyrium**, and on the other side a church, called after the name of *Arcadius*. The Catholic Church did increase; many Heretics, and a multitude of Pagans fleeing to it as doves to their windows. It was not without danger to offer sacrifices to the idols, even in private; laws being made, that those who adventured to do so, should be punished with death and confiscation of goods||.

About this time it happened, that the river *Nile* did not over-flow so plentifully as it was wont to do. The *Gentiles* began to mutiny, and said it was because they were not suffered, according to their ancient use, to do sacrifice to the river. The governour fearing open sedition, acquainted the Emperor, who returned this answer, *It was better to preserve our duty to God, than to prefer the streams of Nile, or the plenty of the country occasioned thereby, to piety and religion. Let the river never flow again, if it must be drawn out with charms, appeased with sacrifices, and its waters defiled with blood*†. But the next season the controversy was ended, by the river's flowing above its highest mark, which put them into a contrary passion. Then they said, old dotting *Nile* had lost its retentive faculty; while others made a more serious improvement: for being convinced of the vanity of their superstition, they abandoned it, and embraced Christianity.

These proceedings at *Alexandria* alarmed the *Gentiles* in other parts of the world. In *Arabia*, *Palestine*‡, *Phœnicia*, &c. they stood upon their guard, and hired country-men to come in and defend their temples. At *Apamea* there was a famous temple dedicated to *Jupiter*, a structure strongly compacted. *Marcellus* bishop of the place resolved to have it pulled down, but could get no man to undertake it, so well were the Pagan temples generally built, and the stones so fast cramped to-

F f 2

gether

* Ibid. cap. 27. Sozomen. lib. 7. cap. 15.

|| Sozomen. lib. 7. cap. 20. † Ibidem. ‡ Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 7. cap. 15. Theodoret. Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 21.

gether with iron and lead, that *Libanius* says it cost the Christians no less pains to pull them down, than it had done the *Gentiles* to build them up*. At length a common porter comes to *Apamea*, who ventures to undertake the work. He undermined the foundation of the portico's that upheld the fabric, and put fire to them. But a Demon appearing in a black dress, drove away the fire. *Marcellus* being acquainted, goes to the church and earnestly prays that the Lord would not suffer the tyranny of the devil further to proceed; but would discover *Satan's* weakness and his own divine power, that the conversion of infidels might not be hindered. Having thus prayed, he took a pot of water he had before set on the holy table, and threw it upon the fire, which like so much oil blew up the flames, so as in a few hours, to the admiration of all who saw it, that stately building lay level with the ground. But this good bishop going to do the like execution on a temple at *Aulon* in the country of *Apamea*, while his company were at work, certain Pagans came behind him, and catching hold on the old gouty man, threw him into the fire, and burned him to death. When his sons would have revenged and prosecuted the murderers of their father, a synod in that country would not suffer them, affirming, that both they and his friends had cause rather to bless God, who counted him worthy to suffer for his sake.

This general overthrow of Paganism in the eastern parts of the *Roman Empire*, made the *Gentiles* look about them, so as their great advocate *Libanius*, a person in such favour with the Emperor; as he made him *Prætorian Præfect*, about this time published an oration *pro templis*, where he encounters the popular arguments the Christians used for demolishing these edifices, and pleads the cause of the Pagans boldly. He contends the Christians had no reason to throw them down in compliance with the zeal of *Constantine* and *Constantius*; these Emperors having been signally punished for their at-

tempts

* *De templis*, pag. m. 23.

tempts of this kind, Constantine's posterity being soon cut off, and some of them came to untimely ends. Constantine himself lived in perpetual fear of the Persians; and as to his adherents, who reaped the spoils of the temples, remarkable vengeance had overtaken them. He adds, That, next to the imperial palace, temples were the greatest ornaments of cities, and therefore ought not to be destroyed: they were the Emperor's possessions *. Will a wise man cast his goods or purse away? Will a master of a ship throw away the ropes the ship needs? He says, a considerable advantage might be raised by them, they might be lent out, and the rents returned to the exchequer. He blames the Monks, who had been active in pulling them down †, especially those in the fields. He traduces them as impostors, who under a grave and demure habit, by pretended mortification, covered with artificial paleness, cheat the world into a good opinion of themselves, while they are equally guilty of gluttony and excess with others. He also blames bitterly the man who had deceived the Emperor to demolish these temples ‡, meaning Cynegius Prætorian Præfect, as Gothofred in his notes on this oration proves †, calling him a profane man, an enemy to the Gods, cruel, greedy of money, and a reproach to the earth that brought him into the world; a man exalted for no merit, and abusing the power he was invested with, to please a covetous wife. This is the scope of Libanius's discourse. Had not Theodosius been a Prince renowned for Clemency, it had been prodigious impudence and folly to have talked so to a Christian Emperor. However it did the cause little service. The process went on, and the total ruin of the Pagan temples and worship followed soon after; which so far enraged the party, that they made several attempts against the life of the Emperor, but providence preserved him.

While these things were doing in the East, zeal against Paganism did not cool in the West. Martin, bishop of Tours, was very much concerned to bring it to

F f 3

ruin

* Libanii oratio pro templis, pag. m. 26. † Ib. pag. 11, 12.

‡ Ibid. pag. 28. † Pag. m. 59, 60.

ruin *. The temples of the *Gentiles*, with all their pomp and retinue, went down apace, and Christian Churches were erected in their room, where there were none before.

Maximus, who commanded in *Gaul*, by his General *Andragathius* having killed the Emperor *Gratian* at *Lyons*, and barbarously denied him burial, usurped the title of Emperor, about the year of our Lord 383. *Theodosius* employed *Ambrose* bishop of *Milan* to persuade the tyrant not to pass into *Italy*, and in the mean time prepared to go against him in person. He defeated this Usurper first in *Hungary*, then in *Italy*, and shut him up in *Aquileia*, where his own soldiers took off his head, A. D. 388.

Peace being thus restored to the empire, *Theodosius* came to *Rome* with his son *Honorius*, where he summoned the senate †, and in a set oration exhorted them to renounce their ancient errors, and embrace the Christian Faith, as the only religion that held forth the true method of pardon of sin and holiness of life. Many of the Pagan Romans were untractable; affirming, *They would never prefer an unreasonable belief before an old religion, under which the city had prosper'd 1200 years together.* The Emperor replied, *If they were thus obstinate, he knew no reason why he should be at pains to maintain them in their idolatry, and would therefore withdraw the public allowances made out of the exchequer, nay, would abolish the things themselves, which he utterly disliked, and the charges thereof would increase the pay of his army.* The Pagan Senators said, *Their sacrifices could not be celebrated without charges from the public; without this, their cities would dwindle into nothing.*

This contest for *Gentilism* was probably managed by *Symmachus*, a man then of great note and learning, who for a flattering discourse he had wrote in praise of *Maximus* the usurper ‖, and for importunity in his addresses in favour of Paganism, fell so deep under the Emperor's dis-

* Sulpicius Severus de vita Martini, cap. 10. & seqq.

† Zosimus, lib. 4. pag. 779. ‖ Socrates, Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 14.

displeasure, as he was forced to take sanctuary in a Christian Church, and was banished out of *Rome*; but upon his submission, he was received again into favour. He wrote an apologetic to the Emperor, who advanced him to be consul in the year of our Lord 391, but render'd him incapable to do any great service to the Pagans, by publishing a law, dated at *Milan*, February 23d *, expressly prohibiting all manner of sacrifices, going into temples, or worshipping images made by men's hands; and inflicting great fines and penalties upon the breakers of the law. In June thereafter he directed a rescript to *Evagrius*, augustal Præfect of *Egypt*, and to *Romanus* Commander of the horse †, That none should be allowed to sacrifice, frequent temples, or celebrate any Pagan rites; certifying those who broke this law, that they should obtain no favour nor remission; and that if any judge enter these polluted places during his administration, he shall be forced to pay 15 pounds of gold to the exchequer.

Socrates informs us of other pieces of reformation, which this religious Emperor *Theodosius* the Great effected at *Rome* ‖, as demolishing some houses that were nests of robbers and whores, in one of which one of his soldiers had been catch'd, and upon his escape, gave the Emperor information; who ordered these wicked people to be punished, and the houses to be thrown down. There was also an infamous punishment of a woman caught in adultery; they used to put her in a bawdy-house, to serve all comers, and rang a bell when they committed leudness, that none might be ignorant of what was doing. Such were the profane customs of the Pagans! These houses the Emperor caused immediately to be demolished, and ordered that when any person was guilty of adultery, they should be punished by other laws conformable to equity. These things being done, *Theodosius* with his son *Honorius* returned to *Constantinople*, *Valentinian* being left Emperor at *Rome*.

F f 4

Next

* Codex Theodos. lib. 16. tit. 10. de Paganis, lege 10.

† Ibidem, lege 11.

‖ *Socrates*, Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 18.

Next year the senate petitioned for liberty to exercise their old religion, but were denied.

Valentinian being at *Vienne* in *Gaul*, was there strangled in bed by the treachery of *Eugenius*, and *Arbogastes*, General of the army. *Eugenius* was at first a school-master, and was brought into the court for his eloquence and good writing: He usurped the title of Emperor, *Arbogastes* retaining the power. The Usurper was courted by the Pagans on all hands, and flattered by their divinations into hopes of success; on which account he restored to them the altar of victory so much contended for, and gave public allowance out of the treasury to defray the charges of their profane rites. *Theodosius* resented the murder of *Valentinian*, as became a generous Prince; he created his sons *Arcadius* and *Honorius* Emperors and his Collegues; and before he went against the Usurper, to make the Pagans feel the effects of his displeasure, he forbade the whole exercise of their religion, temples, sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies; which being the last law of this nature that he made now extant*, I here insert it, and it may be thus englisht.

The August Emperors Theodosius, Arcadius and Honorius, to Rufinus the Prætorian Præfect.

LET no man of what rank, order or quality soever, whether he be honourable for birth, or eminent for dignity, or of mean birth, breeding or fortune, in any place, or in any city, offer even an harmless sacrifice to senseless images, or in any more secret way of expiation, worship his household Gods [*Larem*] with fire, or his genius with wine, or his paternal household Gods with fire or smook, or pay any adoration to them, by setting up lights, burning frankincense, or hanging up garlands to them. And if any man shall dare to offer incense, or to consult the reeking

* Codex Theodosii, lib. 16. tit. 10. leg. 12. pag. m. 516.

Ch. 4. Theodosius, Arcadius *and* Honorius. 441

ing entrails, let it be lawful for any to accuse him; and being found guilty, let him receive sentence, as in cases of high-treason, even tho' it should appear that he did not consult against the life of his prince: For 'tis enough to aggravate his crime, that he would rescind the very laws of nature, search into things unlawful, disclose what is secret, attempt what is prohibited, enquire into another's fate, and give hopes of his death or ruin. But if any man shall burn incense to a corruptible image, a piece of human workmanship, and by a ridiculous example honour that which himself just now formed, and shall by crowning the stock of a tree with garlands, or by erecting an altar of turfs, do what he can, tho' in a mean way, yet highly injurious to religion, to worship a statue; let him as a person guilty of the violation of religion, be punished with the loss of that house or field, wherein he ministred to such Gentile superstition. For 'tis our judgment, that all places wherein it shall appear that incense has been burnt (provided they be legally proved to belong to the persons that did so) ought to be confiscated to our Exchequer. But if the place where such a person shall offer any sacrifice, be in any public temple, or chappel, or another man's house or ground, if he did it without the knowledge of the owner, let him be fined in 25 pounds of gold*, and let him who connives at this wickedness be fined in the same sum with him who sacrifices. This our pleasure is to be observed by the judges, defenders and curials of every city, that the officers having discovered any such matter, shall immediately bring it before the judges, and they forthwith to see to the execution of the penalty: But if they shall conceal any thing, either thro' favour or carelessness, they shall be punished by the judges; and if the judges, upon information of these officers, shall take no notice of it, but defer punishment, they shall be fined in 30 pound of gold, and their officers be liable to the same penalty. Given at Constantinople, Novemb. 8.

Arca-

* N.B. The Proportion of Gold to Silver being stated at One to Twelve, one Pound of Gold is 36 lib. Sterl. consequently 25 Pound of Gold makes the Sum of 900 lib. Sterl.

Arcadius the second time, and Rufinus being consuls. That is, A. D. 392.

This law struck down *Paganism* root and branch, so as it never recovered it self into any tolerable degree of life and power: the *Gentiles* being now restrained, not only from the grosser kinds of sacrifices, but even from what hitherto had been permitted, the very burning of incense, and perfuming their temples and altars *. *Theodosius* after this prepared an army against the murderers of *Valentinian*, and usurpers of the empire. He declared his son *Arcadius* Consul for the third time, and placing his confidence in Christ, 'marched his army into *Italy*. His forces were inferior in number to those of his enemies, but he spent the night before the battle in prayer †. Being encouraged by the gracious answer God was pleased to give him, he fought near *Aquileia*, and was victorious. The very wind favoured him, beating back the darts and arrows of his enemies into their faces, and blinding them with dust. *Eugenius* was taken, and killed for his impious usurpation: *Arbogastes* fled, and for fear killed himself. *Claudian* a Heathen sings sweetly of this remarkable victory ||.

Soon after this, *Theodosius* fell sick, and died at *Milan*, February 24th, A.D. 395, having lived sixty, and reigned sixteen

* Libanius pro templis, pag. 10. † Socrates, Hist. lib. 5. cap. 25. Theodoret. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 24. Sozom. lib. 7. cap. 24.
|| Claudian. de 3. Consulatu Honorii, ver. 93. & seqq.

*Te propter gelidis Aquilo de monte procellis
Obruit adversas acies, revolutaque tela
Vertit in auctores, & turbine reppulit hastas.
O nimium dilecte Deo, cui fundit ab antris
Æolus armatas hyemes; cui militat æther,
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.*

The same in English :

For thee the Northern Wind from hills with mighty blasts
O'erwhelms thine enemies, their darts and arrows casts
Back in their faces, them to overthrow;
Too well belov'd of God, for whom the air does blow
Whole armed winters, which the Heavens do send,
And winds, which at thy Trumpet Sounds attend.

sixteen years†, leaving the empire to his two sons, *Arcadius* and *Honorius*, the former at seventeen years of age, succeeding in the East, the other at eleven, in the West; *Rufinus* being tutor to the latter, and *Stilico* to the former. *Ambrose* says of him, *I loved the man; for when he was dying, he was more concerned for the state of the Church than for himself. He was indeed a nursing father to the Christian Church, and a restorer of her breaches.*

Before I conclude this chapter, I shall observe, that the Christian Religion was propagated in *Persia* in the fourth century. Some authors are of opinion, that there were Christians in that kingdom in the days of *John* the Apostle, since his first epistle is in some copies directed to the *Parthians* ||. And *Bardefanes*, who flourish'd in *Mesopotamia* in the end of the second century, writes, *That there were Christians in his time in the country of the Parthians, of the Medes and Persians, as far as Bactria.* But in the fourth age the kingdom of Christ was further enlarged in *Persia*. In the beginning thereof, St. *James* of *Nisibia* went from *Mesopotamia* into *Persia*, to visit the Christians who were already there, and to make new ones. The Christian Religion was spread there as early as the council of *Nice* in 325. *Adiabene* was almost all Christian. *Constantine* the Great was very glad to hear so good news; and *Sapor* King of *Persia* having sent ambassadors to him about the year 332, to make an alliance with him, he wrote a letter to that King, wherein he prays him to grant protection to the Christians that were in his kingdom. Nevertheless there arose a persecution in *Persia* against the Christians, which was raised by the *Magi*, who accused *Simeon* Arch-bishop of *Seleucia*, and *Ctesiphon*, of favouring the *Romans*, who were then at war with the *Persians*. *Sapor* being enraged against the Christians upon that calumny, burden'd them with unsupportable taxes, and ordered all the priests and ministers of the Christians to have their heads cut

† Socrates, Hist. lib. 5. cap. 26.

|| Du Pin's Abridgment of Church History, vol. 2. pag. 86.

off, commanded their Churches to be demolished, and all that belonged to them to be carried into the public treasury, and *Simeon* to be brought to him, as a traitor to the state and religion of the *Persians*. These orders were executed, and *Simeon* taken and brought to the King in irons. He refusing to worship the sun, was sent into prison, and some time after condemned to death, with many other Christians ||. The year following *Sapor* published an edict, wherein he condemned to death all that should profess Christianity. This edict was followed by a general persecution, in which a great number of Christians perished. *Sapor* ordered, that none should be put to death but the Chiefs of the Christian Religion, that is, the bishops and priests; the persecution was violent against them, and did not end but with the death of that king. *Isdigerd*, who succeeded *Sapor*, after some others, in the year 399, was very favourable to the Christians*, at least in the beginning of his reign: but his son *Varanes* persecuted them cruelly, and even hindred them from flying from the persecution, by going out of his dominions.

Upon the Emperor *Theodosius's* death, the *Gentiles* seem to have resumed new hopes, and therefore *Arcadius*, about six months after his accession to the throne, upon his father's demise, *debarred them all use of temples or sacrifices in any place, or at any time whatsoever, reviving all former penalties made against them*†. The next year he cancelled all privileges anciently granted to Pagan Priests of any order, or under any title or name whatsoever, since it was not reasonable they should enjoy those privileges, whose very profession was condemned by law‡. Then the temples, being the nests of idolatry and superstition, went down in all places of the East: the materials whereof *Arcadius*, the year following, gave for repairing highways, bridges, aquæducts, and other public walls and buildings |||. And whereas in some places, temples were left

|| Sozomen. Hist. Eccl. lib. 2. cap. 8, ---- 15.

* Socrates, lib. 7. cap. 8. † Codex Theod. lib. 16. tit. 10. lege 13.

‡ Ibid. lege 14. ||| Ibid. lib. 15. tit. 1. lege 36.

left standing in the fields, for conveniency of the country people, he commanded even those to be taken down, that so the foundation of superstition *, which with respect to the temples and idolatry of the Pagans in *Phœnicia*, was procured by *Chrysoström*; who also understanding that the *Scythian Nomades*, who dwelt beyond the *Ister*, were disposed to entertain the Gospel, but were destitute of any to preach it to them, got men of an apostolical spirit to undertake this work. *Theodoret* says †, *I have read letters writ to Leontius Bishop of Ancyra, concerning the conversion of the Scythians, and desiring fit teachers might be sent to them.*

Chrysoström also finding the *Goths* over-run with *Arianism*, got some proper persons of that country, and ordained them readers, deacons and presbyters, and assigned them a Church within the city. By their industry he reclaimed many to the Catholic Church ‖; and that this might succeed the better, he himself went often and preached among them, making use of an interpreter to convey his discourse to the people, and persuaded other eloquent preachers to do the like.

Honorius did not carry the reformation so far in the West as his brother did in the East. He forbade all sacrifices; but commanded all ornaments of public buildings, such as statues and images, to be preserved, any laws or statutes to the contrary notwithstanding ‡. The council of *Carthage* petitioned **, “ That all remainders of idolatry
“ in *Afric* might be abolished; that all temples that
“ stood in the fields, or in private corners, might be
“ pulled down; that the *Gentile* feasts and entertainments
“ attended with profane scandalous dancings (at which
“ sometimes they constrained Christians to be present,
“ and that upon the solemnities of the martyrs) might
“ be prohibited; that the sports and shews exhibited on
“ the theatres, might not be on the Lord’s-Day, or
“ upon

* Ibid. lib. 16. tit. 10. lege 16. † Hist. Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 29. 31.

‡ Ibid. cap. 30. ‖ Ibid. cap. 30.

‡ Codex Theodosii, lib. 16. tit. 10. lege 15.

** Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Africanæ, Can. 58, 60, 61. Conc. Tom. 2. col. 1085.

“ upon any Christian Solemnity, and that no Christian
 “ might be compelled to be there.” In answer to which
 petition, the Emperor enacted, by orders sent to *Apollo-*
dorus, proconsul of *Afric* *, “ That as to temples, if not
 “ used to any unlawful purpose, they should stand in-
 “ tire ; but if any man should do sacrifice in them, he
 “ should be punished according to law ; and all idols,
 “ abused to vain and foolish superstition, should be
 “ taken down by the public officers. That as to
 “ their public feasts and meetings, the law had already
 “ forbidden all profane rites ; but that their common
 “ meetings, their shews, and entertainments of the peo-
 “ ple, should be still suffered ; provided they were done
 “ without sacrifices, or any damnable superstition, as
 “ the words of the law bear.”

Thus have we seen how Paganism ebbed and flowed
 in the reigns of the several princes, after Christianity
 became the Religion of the empire in the fourth century.
 The sum of the whole we have in the words of *Theo-*
doret † : “ *Constantine* the Great, a prince worthy to
 “ be praised, who first adorned the imperial throne
 “ with piety, when he observed the world running
 “ mad after idolatry, expressly forbade that any should
 “ worship *Dæmons*. His sons followed their father’s
 “ footsteps : but *Julian* revived the wickedness of Pa-
 “ ganism, and added new fuel to its old errors. To
 “ him succeeded *Jovian*, who again prohibited the wor-
 “ ship of idols. The elder *Valentinian* governed *Europe*
 “ according to the same rules ; while *Valens* in the East
 “ permitted every body to worship and adore what
 “ they pleased, but constantly persecuted those, and
 “ those only, who maintain’d the Catholic and Aposto-
 “ lic Doctrine. All his time the altars smoked with
 “ incense, and the *Gentiles* brought their sacrifices and
 “ drink-offerings to their images, and kept their pub-
 “ lic feasts in the open market-place : The priests and

“ vo-

* Codex Theod. lib. 16. tit. 10. lege 17, 18.

† Historia Eccl. lib. 5. cap. 20.

“ votaries of *Bacchus*, clothed in goat’s skins, ran up
“ and down, tearing dogs in pieces, howling and
“ making a dreadful noise, behaving themselves in a
“ most wild and frantic manner, with the rest of those
“ mad ceremonies, whereby they were wont to cele-
“ brate their profane festivals. All which the most
“ religious Prince *Theodosius*, when he came to the em-
“ pire, did utterly extirpate and abolish, and drove
“ them to eternal silence and oblivion.”

We may hear more of the Progress of Christianity,
and of the Overthrow of Paganism, in the sequel of this
history. In the mean time, I conclude this volume;
heartily praying, *That the kingdom of satan may fall as
lightning from heaven, and that the kingdoms of the world
may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,
and that he may reign for ever and ever.*

The End of the First Volume.

A N

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